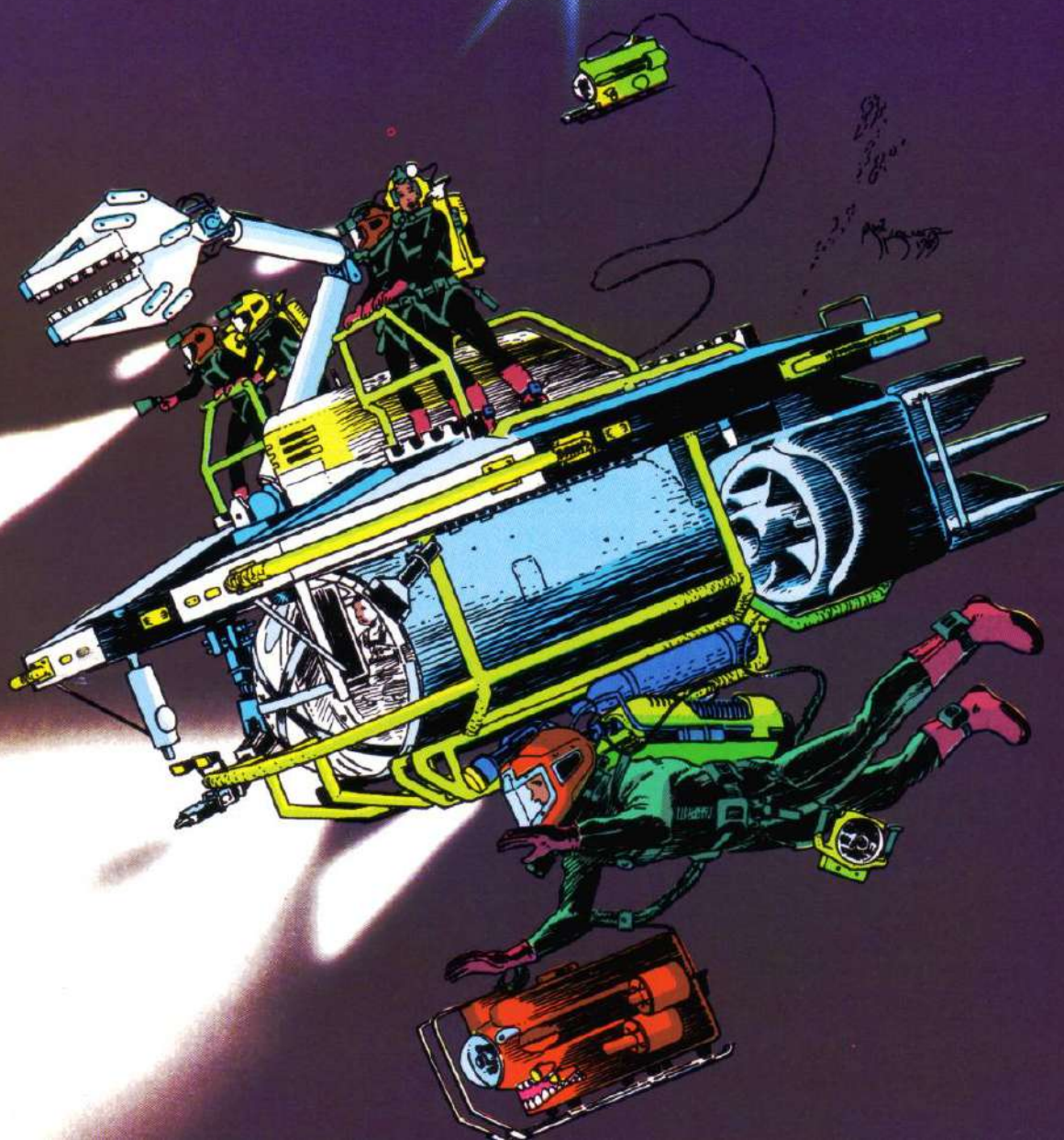
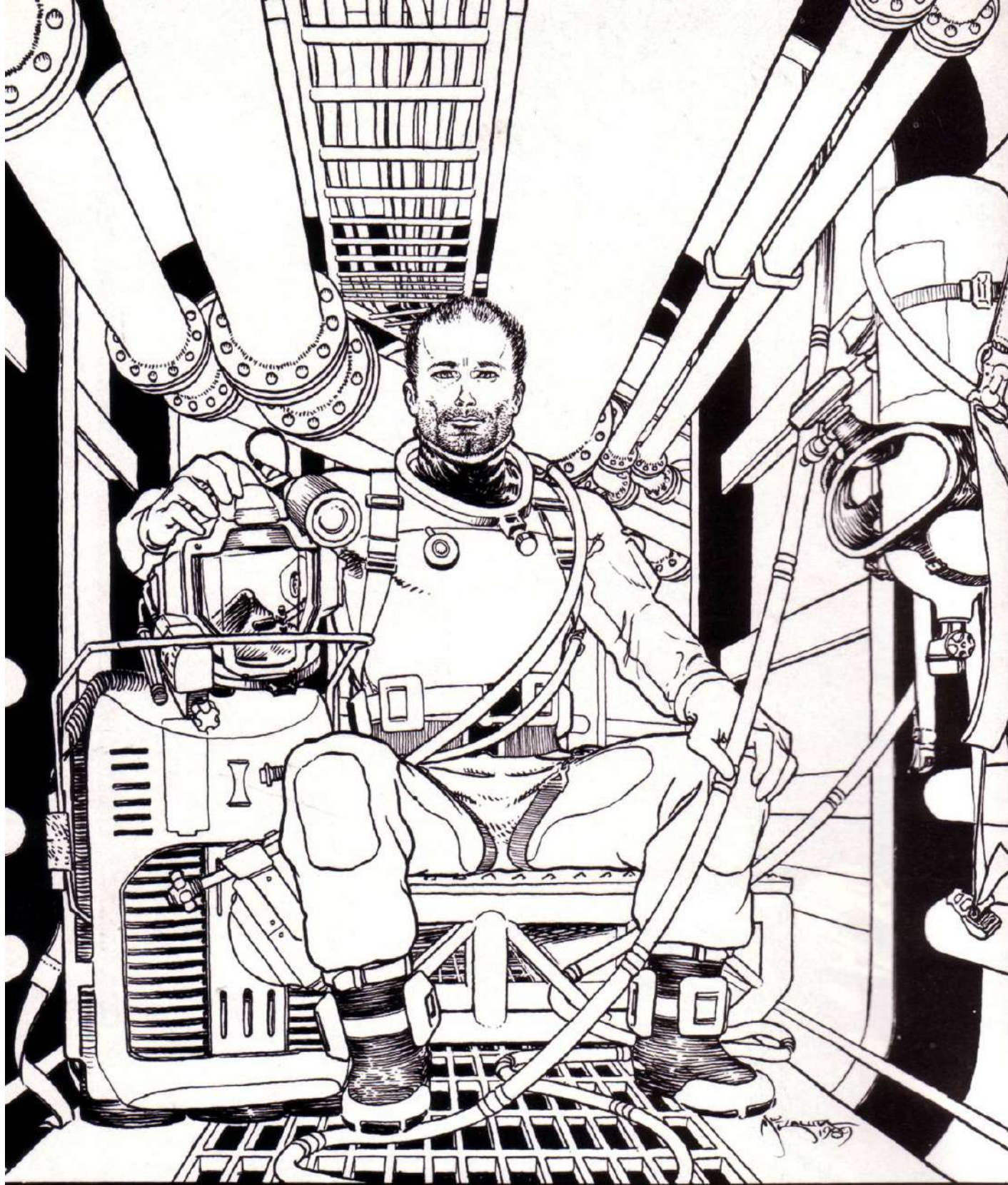




1 (of 2)
\$2.25 U.S.
\$2.80 Canada

THE ABYSS





TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX Presents A DARK HORSE COMICS Adaptation of A JAMES CAMERON Film
 SCREENPLAY BY RANDY STRADLEY ILLUSTRATED BY MICHAEL KALUTA COLORED BY RANDY STRADLEY LETTERED BY TODD KLEIN
 ADAPTED BY RANDY STRADLEY WITH PRODUCTION DRAWINGS BY MOEBIUS AND STEVE BURG ADDITIONAL TEXT BY VAN LING SPECIAL CONSULTANTS PAMELA NORTH AND ANNE MARIE STEIN
 PRODUCTION MANAGER CHRIS CHALENOR PRODUCTION JIM BRADRICK DEBBIE BYRD JERRY PROSSER AND JIM SPIVEY
 PUBLISHER MIKE RICHARDSON EDITOR RANDY STRADLEY OPERATIONS DIRECTOR NEIL HANKERSON
 SPECIAL THANKS TO JAMES CAMERON HILBERT HAKIM GALE ANNE HURD VAN LING JEAN-MARC LOFFICIER
 LEE MOYER PAMELA NORTH PHILLIP NORWOOD ANNE MARIE STEIN AND CLIFFORD WERBER
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FOR A TODDLER TAKING ITS FIRST STEPS, JUST PUTTING ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER IS A BIG ACCOMPLISHMENT. AS WE GET OLDER-- AS WALKING BECOMES AUTOMATIC-- WE START SETTING BIGGER AND BIGGER GOALS FOR OURSELVES. SOMEHOW, WE FIND THE ENERGY, OR COURAGE, OR SHEER PIG-HEADEDNESS TO KEEP ON TAKING THE **NEXT STEP**. SOMETIMES, THOUGH, I THINK WE FAIL TO MAKE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN WHAT WE **CAN** DO AND WHAT WE **SHOULD** DO.

WE WERE 1700 FEET DOWN AND TEN WEEKS INTO AN ELEVEN WEEK OPERATION THAT SOME OF THE ENGINEERS AT **BENTHIC PETROLEUM** REFERRED TO AS "**LINDSEY'S FOLLY**." BUT THAT WAS JUST PROFESSIONAL JEALOUSY. **DEEPCORE** HAD OUT-PERFORMED EVERYONE'S EXPECTATIONS, AND WE WERE NO MORE THAN FOUR DAYS FROM PROVING SUBMERSIBLE DRILLING PLATFORMS A VIABLE COMMERCIAL VENTURE.

AT THAT DEPTH IT WAS ALWAYS NIGHT-- AS DARK AND SILENT AS A NEWBORN'S DREAMS. FORGETTING THAT THE **REAL WORLD** STILL EXISTED UP ABOVE WAS EASY TO DO...

...EASY, BUT NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE.

BUD,
PICK UP THE
TOPSIDE LINE
--URGENT.

BRIGMAN
HERE. KIRK HILL?
WHAT'S GOING--

...I AM CALM.
I'M A CALM PERSON.
IS THERE SOME REASON
WHY I **SHOULDN'T**
BE CALM?...

ATTENTION
FLATBED AND
ALL DIVERS!
DROP WHAT YOU'RE
DOING. EVERYBODY
OUT OF THE POOL.

WHAT'S
GOIN' ON,
BOSS?

WE'VE BEEN
TOLD TO SHUT DOWN
THE HOLE AND PREPARE
TO MOVE **DEEPCORE**-- A
MATTER OF **NATIONAL
SECURITY**. GET DRESSED
AND GET UP TO CONTROL.
THERE'S A BRIEFING
IN TEN MINUTES.

AT 9:22 LOCAL TIME THIS MORNING, AN AMERICAN NUCLEAR SUBMARINE, THE U.S.S. MONTANA, WENT DOWN 22 MILES FROM HERE. THERE HAS BEEN NO CONTACT WITH THE SUB SINCE THEN.

YOUR COMPANY HAS AUTHORIZED THE NAVY'S USE OF THIS FACILITY. WE NEED DIVERS TO ENTER THE SUB AND SEARCH FOR SURVIVORS--



DON'T YOU GUYS HAVE YOUR OWN STUFF FOR THIS TYPE OF THING, COMMODORE DEMARCO?

I KNEW MY CREW. THEY WERE GOOD, BUT THEY WEREN'T TRAINED FOR RESCUE WORK.

BY THE TIME WE CAN GET OUR EQUIPMENT THERE, HURRICANE FREDERICK WILL BE RIGHT ON TOP OF US. BUT YOU CAN GET YOUR RIG UNDER THE STORM AND BE ON-SITE IN 15 HOURS--

KIRK HILL KNEW MY CREW, TOO. AND HE KNEW JUST WHAT TO SAY, THE PRICK.

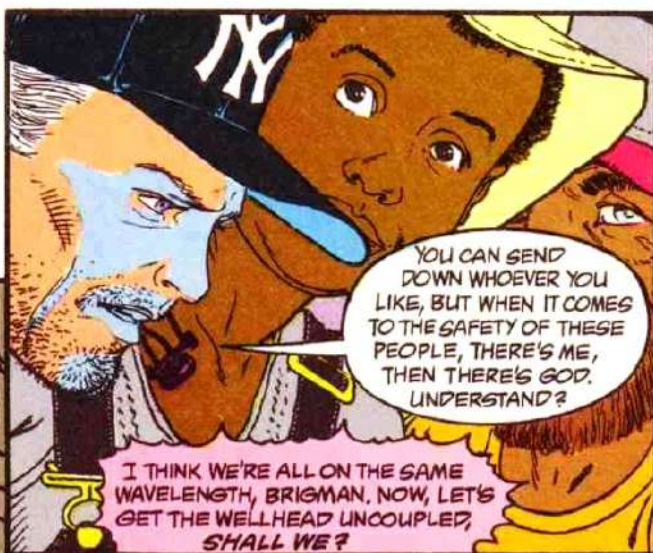
HELL, FOR TRIPLE TIME I'LL CRAWL THROUGH RAZOR BLADES AND SHOWER OFF WITH LIME JUICE.



I'VE BEEN AUTHORIZED TO OFFER SPECIAL-DUTY BONUSES EQUIVALENT TO THREE TIMES NORMAL DIVE PAY.



A FOUR-MAN SEAL TEAM WILL TRANSFER DOWN TO SUPERVISE THE OPERATION.



YOU CAN SEND DOWN WHOEVER YOU LIKE, BUT WHEN IT COMES TO THE SAFETY OF THESE PEOPLE, THERE'S ME, THEN THERE'S GOD. UNDERSTAND?

I THINK WE'RE ALL ON THE SAME WAVELENGTH, BRIGMAN. NOW, LET'S GET THE WELLHEAD UNCOUPLED, SHALL WE?



WHEN LINDSEY FINDS OUT ABOUT THIS, THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE TO SHOOT HER WITH A TRANQUILIZER GUN.

"ONE NIGHT" WAS RIGHT--LINDSEY WOULDN'T TAKE KINDLY TO HAVING HER OPERATION SHUT DOWN, NOT EVEN FOR THE U.S. NAVY. MY ONE CONSOLATION WAS THAT LINDSEY WAS IN HOUSTON. I WOULDN'T HAVE TO FACE HER UNTIL EVERYTHING WAS OVER AND DONE WITH.

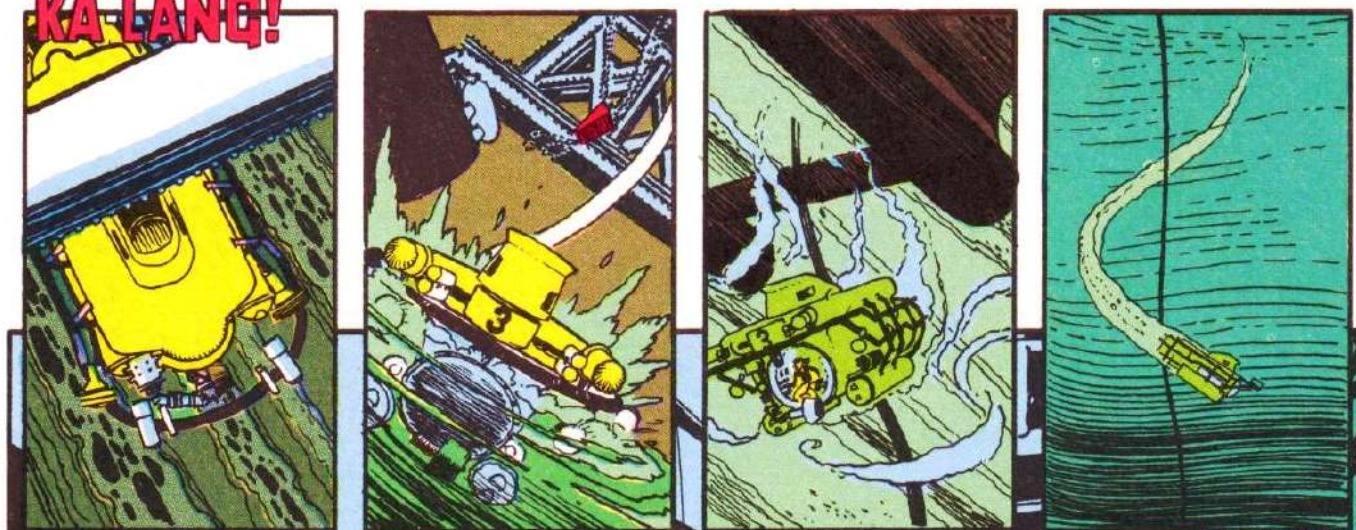
CAB THREE READY FOR LAUNCH, KIRK HILL!

LINDSEY?! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?

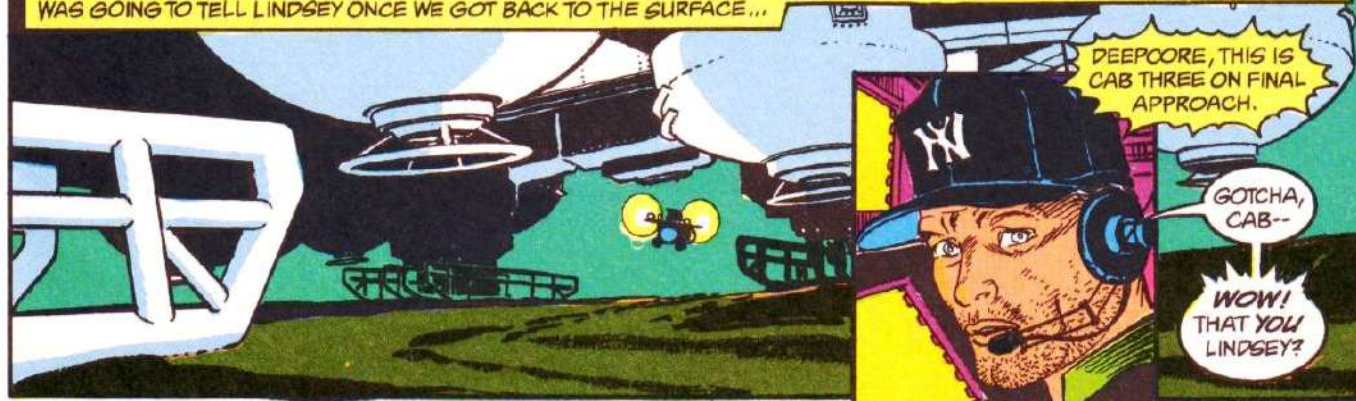




KA-LANG!



STEERING 5500 TONS OF UNDERWATER DRILLING HARDWARE ACROSS TWENTY-TWO MILES OF BARREN SEA BOTTOM ISN'T NEARLY AS EXCITING AS IT SOUNDS-- ESPECIALLY AT A ONE AND A HALF KNOT CRAWL. I PASSED THE TIME PLANNING WHAT I WAS GOING TO TELL LINDSEY ONCE WE GOT BACK TO THE SURFACE ...





GET COMFORTABLE. WE GOT EIGHT HOURS IN THE COMPRESSION CHAMBER ADJUSTING TO OUR CURRENT DEPTH. WORSE YET, IT'LL TAKE **THREE WEEKS** TO DECOMPRESS BACK TO SURFACE PRESSURE--

WE'VE BEEN FULLY BRIEFED, MRS. BRIGMAN.



DON'T CALL ME THAT, COFFEY-- I HATE IT... OKAY, WE HAVE TO START WATCHING EACH OTHER FOR SIGNS OF H.P.N.S.--

HIGH-PRESSURE NERVOUS SYNDROME. MUSCLE TREMORS, USUALLY THE HANDS FIRST. NAUSEA, EXCITABILITY, DIS-ORIENTATION...



RIGHT. ABOUT ONE PERSON IN TWENTY CAN'T HANDLE IT. THEY GO BUGGO. THERE'S NO WAY TO PREDICT WHO'S SUSCEPTIBLE, SO--

LOOK, WE'RE ALL CHECKED OUT.

OH... WELL...



THEN THIS IS NOTHING NEW FOR YOU...



I GUESS IT'S GONNA BE A LONG EIGHT HOURS.

IT'S AMAZING HOW FAST EIGHT HOURS CAN PASS WHEN YOU DON'T WANT IT TO.



HIPPY, YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE THAT RAT A DISEASE.

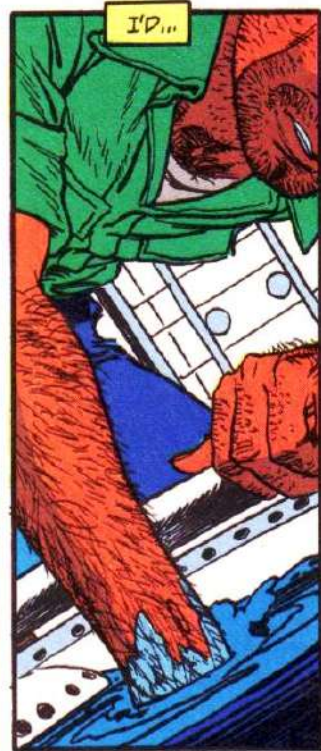


I HAD A LOT RIDING ON THIS PROJECT, BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU LET THEM GRAB MY RIG!



YOUR RIG? BENTHIC PETROLEUM PAID FOR THIS--

BUT I DESIGNED THE DAMN THING.



ONCE DEEPCORE HAD REACHED ITS DESTINATION, THE *SEALS*, COMMANDED BY LT. COFFEY, WASTED NO TIME SETTING UP FOR THE DIVE. THE SUB HAD GONE DOWN ON A LEDGE IN 2000 FEET OF WATER AT THE EDGE OF THE CAYMAN TROUGH. THE NAVY HAD BEEN LUCKY. A FEW YARDS FURTHER OVER THE TRENCH AND THE *MONTANA* WOULD'VE GONE STRAIGHT TO THE BOTTOM--THREE AND A HALF MILES BELOW.



ON THE DIVE, YOU WILL DO ABSOLUTELY *NOTHING* WITHOUT DIRECT ORDERS FROM ME, AND YOU WILL FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS WITHOUT DISCUSSION. IS THAT CLEAR? ALL RIGHT, I WANT EVERYONE READY TO GET WET IN 15 MINUTES.

HEY, YOU COME ON MY RIG AND START ORDERING MY GUYS AROUND. IT WON'T WORK. WE HAVE A CERTAIN WAY OF DOING THINGS HERE--



I'M NOT INTERESTED IN *YOUR* WAY OF DOING THINGS, BRIGMAN. JUST GET YOUR TEAM READY TO DIVE.

HEY BUD, YOU KNOW YOUR HAND IS BLUE?

FLUID BREATHING SYSTEM? YOU'RE SAYING YOU GOT LIQUID IN YOUR LUNGS?



OXYGENATED FLOUROCARBON EMULSION. WE USE IT IF WE HAVE TO GO REALLY DEEP. SEE, YOU BREATHE LIQUID, SO YOU CAN'T BE COMPRESSED. PRESSURE DOESN'T GET TO YOU.

HERE, I'LL SHOW YOU. WE'LL PUT SOME FLUID IN THIS CONTAINER--



AND THEN PUT YOUR FRIEND INTO THE FLUID.



BEANY!

SQUEEE!



SEE? HE'S DIGGIN' IT!



THAT IS, NO BULLSHIT, HANDS DOWN THE GOD-DAMNEDEST THING I EVER SAW.



AT THAT MOMENT I HAD TO AGREE WITH CATFISH. BUT NEITHER OF US HAD ANY IDEA OF WHAT WAS IN STORE FOR US IN THE NEXT TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

EVERYTHING ABOUT THE TRIP TO THE MONTANA SEEMED LIKE A *TYPICAL* WORK DIVE -- EXCEPT THAT COFFEY AND HIS BOYS WERE ALONG FOR THE RIDE, AND WE WERE ALL PAINFULLY AWARE OF THE DANGER WE FACED IF THE SUB'S NUCLEAR REACTOR HAD BEEN BREACHED.



WHAT GOOD IS TRIPLE-TIME IF YOUR DICK FALLS OFF IN SIX MONTHS?

KNOCK OFF THE CHATTER, CAB THREE. YOU GETTING ANYTHING, CAB ONE?

NO RADIATION, BUT THE MAGNETOMETER IS TWITCHING. SIDE-SCAN IS SHOWING A BIG RETURN...

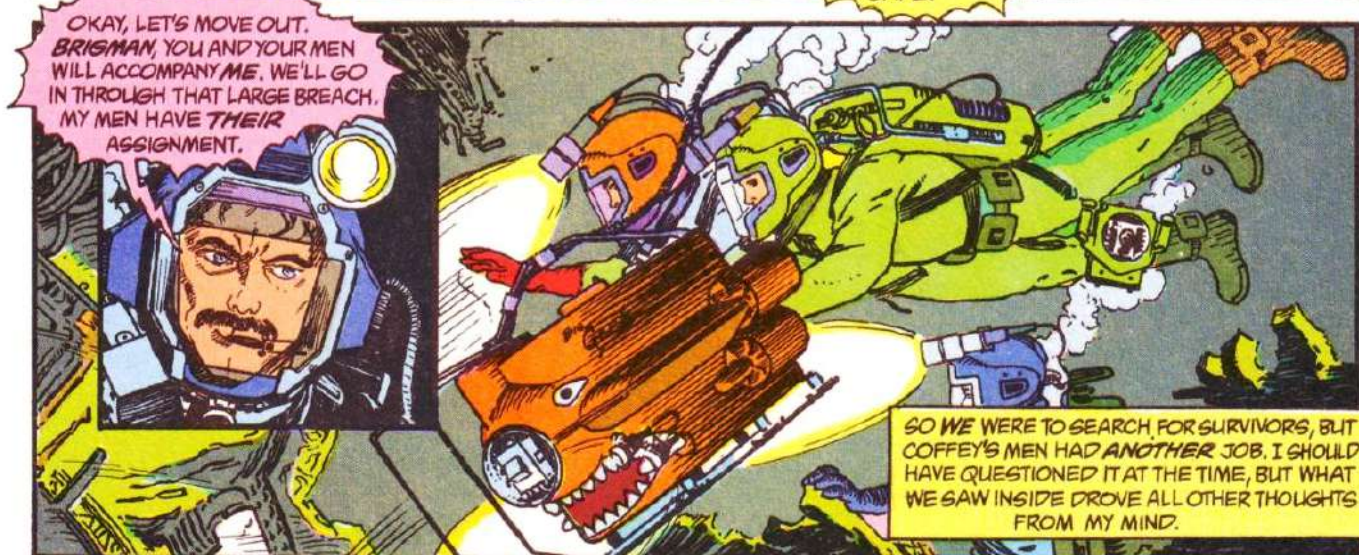
UH...WE FOUND IT.

THE MONTANA MADE DEEPCORE LOOK LIKE A MINIATURE. I COULD UNDERSTAND WHY COFFEY AND HIS MEN WERE SO UNIMPRESSED WITH OUR WORK--THE MILITARY HAD BIGGER AND BETTER TOYS.



BUT FOR ALL ITS SIZE, THE MONTANA WASN'T INVULNERABLE. WHATEVER HAD HAPPENED HAD LEFT A HOLE ALMOST BIG ENOUGH TO DRIVE *FLATBED* THROUGH. AT LEAST THERE WAS NO RADIATION.

LITTLE GEEK'S COUNTER IS TICKING, BUT IT'S BELOW THE LEVEL YOU SAID WAS SAFE.



OKAY, LET'S MOVE OUT. BRISMAN, YOU AND YOUR MEN WILL ACCOMPANY ME. WE'LL GO IN THROUGH THAT LARGE BREACH. MY MEN HAVE *THEIR* ASSIGNMENT.

SO WE WERE TO SEARCH FOR SURVIVORS, BUT COFFEY'S MEN HAD *ANOTHER* JOB. I SHOULD HAVE QUESTIONED IT AT THE TIME, BUT WHAT WE SAW INSIDE DROVE ALL OTHER THOUGHTS FROM MY MIND.

WHATEVER'D HAPPENED HAD BEEN **FAST**. THERE'D BEEN NO TIME TO REACT, NO TIME TO SEAL BULKHEADS AGAINST THE RUSH OF WATER. THEY'D ALL DIED **QUICKLY**-- BUT NONE OF THEM LOOKED AS IF THEY'D DIED **EASILY**.

COFFEY SPLIT US INTO TWO GROUPS TO SEARCH OTHER PARTS OF THE SUB. IT WAS APPARENT TO ALL OF US THAT WE WOULD BE FINDING NO SURVIVORS, BUT IT WAS A RELIEF TO LEAVE THE CONTROL ROOM ALL THE SAME...

I LEFT CATFISH, FINLER AND SONNY AT ONE LEVEL AND TOOK JAMMER, WHO'D SEEMED THE MOST AFFECTED BY THE SCENE IN THE SUB'S CONTROL ROOM, WITH ME. WE DESCENDED FURTHER INTO THE HEART OF THE MONTANA.

FROM THE WAY JAMMER WAS HYPER-VENTILATING, IT WAS CLEAR HE COULDN'T TAKE MUCH MORE. I WASN'T IN SUCH GREAT SHAPE MYSELF, BUT I WASN'T GONNA LET COFFEY SEE US BACK OFF FROM THE JOB.

WHERE ARE WE?

MISSILE COMPARTMENT. THOSE ARE THE LAUNCH TUBES.

LORD ALMIGHTY.

EASY, BIG GUY.

DON'T WORRY, JAMMER. WE'LL BE IN VOICE CONTACT THE WHOLE TIME...

...YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SEE MY LIGHTS...

...JUST KEEP BREATHING STEADY...

... I'LL JUST BE FIVE MINUTES... THEN WE CAN -- JA-MER? --AN YOU --AR ME?

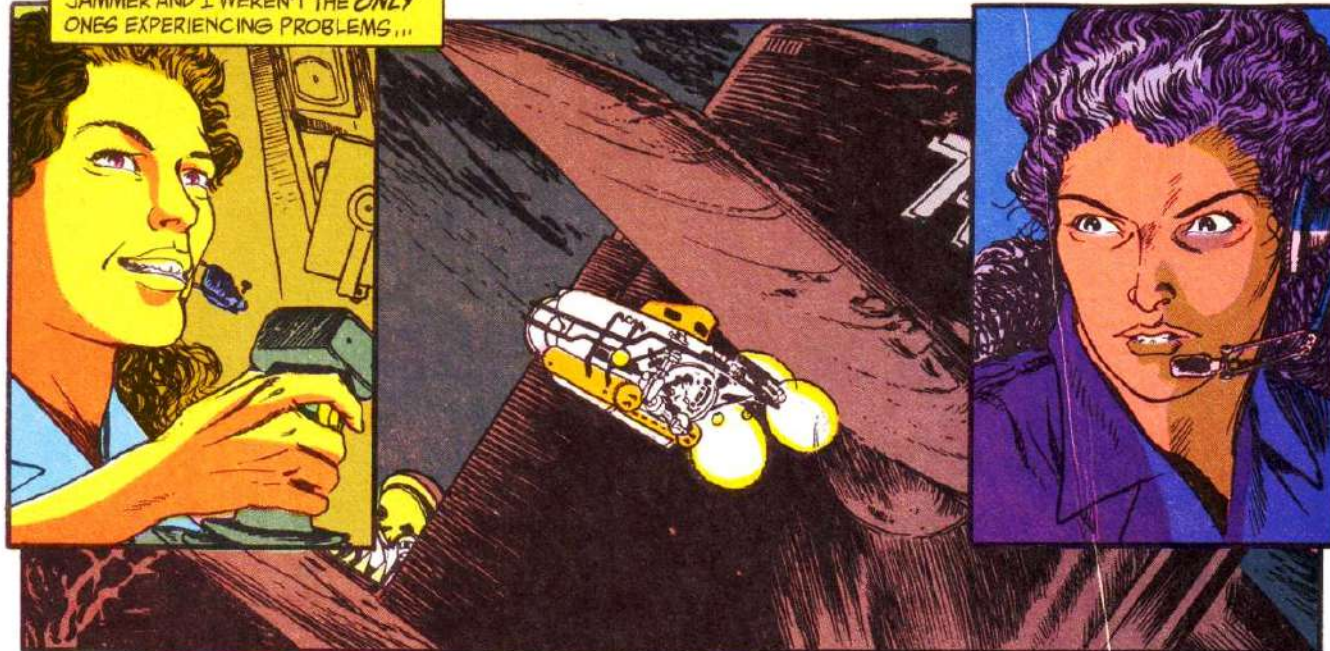
MY FIRST THOUGHT WAS, "WHAT A TIME FOR MY BATTERIES TO GIVE OUT." BUT WHEN I LOOKED BACK, I COULDN'T SEE JAMMER'S LIGHTS **EITHER**.

EVERYTHING HAD GONE OUT AT ONCE.

AS SUDDENLY AS IT HAD GONE, POWER RETURNED. BUT DURING THAT MOMENT OF DARKNESS SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO JAMMER TO SEND HIM INTO TOTAL PANIC.

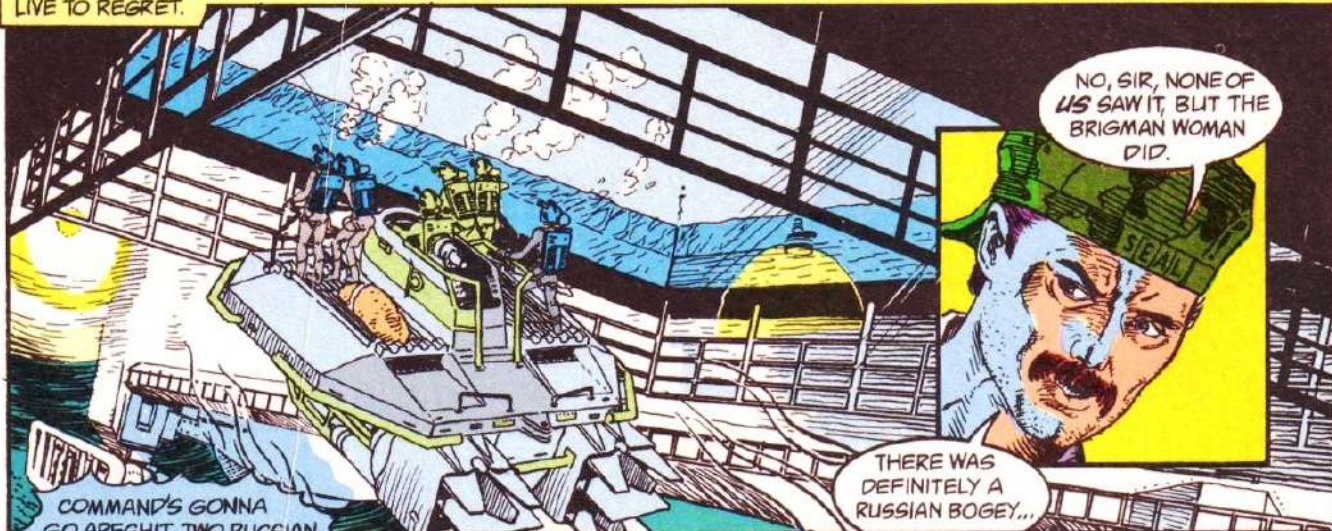
JAMMER!
WAIT!

I DIDN'T KNOW IT AT THE TIME, BUT JAMMER AND I WEREN'T THE ONLY ONES EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS...



SOMEHOW, EVERYONE MADE IT BACK TO DEEPCORE IN ONE PIECE. JAMMER WAS OUT COLD, THE CAMERAS ON CAB ONE WERE TOTALED, AND LINDSEY WAS BUSTING WITH EXCITEMENT OVER SOMETHING NO ONE ELSE HAD SEEN. I HADN'T SEEN HER THAT PUMPED UP OVER ANYTHING SINCE SHE'D SIGNED WITH BENTHIC--NOT EVEN OUR WEDDING NIGHT.

HAPPENING, I NEGLECTED TO QUESTION THE **BUNDLE** COFFEY'S MEN HAD BROUGHT BACK WITH THEM. IT WAS AN OVERSIGHT I'D LIVE TO REGRET.



NO, SIR, NONE OF US SAW IT, BUT THE BRIGMAN WOMAN DID.

THERE WAS DEFINITELY A RUSSIAN BOGEY...

COMMAND'S GONNA GO APESHIT. TWO RUSSIAN ATTACK SUBS HAVE BEEN TRACKED TO WITHIN FIFTY MILES OF HERE--

--AND NOW WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THE HELL THEY ARE.

I DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE--I'M CONFIRMING YOU TO GO TO PHASE TWO.

IS THERE A PROBLEM, LT. COFFEY?

YES...

...I MEAN NO, NEGATIVE, SIR.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT I SAW. OKAY? IF COFFEY WANTS TO CALL IT A RUSSIAN SUBMERSIBLE, FINE. NO PROBLEM.

BUT YOU THINK IT WAS SOMETHING ELSE. WHAT? ONE OF OURS?

NO. LOOK... I DON'T KNOW WHAT I SAW, BUT--

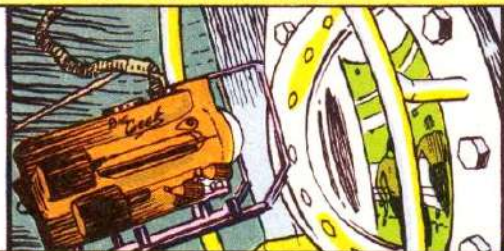
HEY! CHECK THIS OUT!



...THE KREMLIN CONTINUES TO DENY RUSSIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE SINKING OF THE U.S.S. MONTANA, WHICH IS BELIEVED TO HAVE GONE DOWN WITH ALL HANDS. HOWEVER, THE MOOD HERE IN THE CARIBBEAN IS ONE OF SUSPICION, EVEN CONFRONTATION.

A NUMBER OF RUSSIAN AND CUBAN VESSELS HAVE BEEN CIRCLING WITHIN A FEW MILES OF THE AREA, AND SOVIET AIRCRAFT HAVE REPEATEDLY BEEN WARNED AWAY. MEANWHILE, THE SOVIETS ARE PROTESTING THE MASSIVE BUILDUP OF U.S. FORCES IN THE AREA, WITH CUBA ONLY 80 MILES AWAY...

THE NEWS WASN'T GOOD BY ANYBODY'S STANDARDS. WHAT HAD STARTED OUT AS A RESCUE MISSION LOOKED AS THOUGH IT MIGHT LEAD TO WORLD WAR THREE! STILL, I WAS INCLINED TO TAKE THE NEWS WITH A GRAIN OF SALT. AFTER ALL, *OUR* MISSION WAS *OVER*. IN A FEW HOURS WE'D RECEIVE ORDERS TO PULL OUT, AND EVERYTHING COULD RETURN TO NORMAL.



BUT HIPPI, WHO WAS SURE *EVERYTHING* WAS A CONSPIRACY, DECIDED TO INITIATE SOME COVERT ACTIVITIES OF HIS OWN--WITH THE HELP OF BIG GEEK'S CAMERAS.



SAY HELLO TO MIRV.*

*MULTIPLE INDEPENDENTLY-TARGETED RE-ENTRY VEHICLE.



ARE YOU SURE? WHY BRING IT HERE?



MAYBE A PLAN TO KEEP THE MONTANA AWAY FROM THE RUSSIANS--
HOTWIRE ONE OF THE NUKES, PUT IT BACK ON THE SUB, AND FRY THE WHOLE THIN--

OH, UH, HI LINDS--



WHAT DID YOU SAY??



WHAM!
COFFEY! WITH EVERYTHING THAT'S GOING ON UP IN THE WORLD, YOU BRING A NUCLEAR WEAPON ONTO MY RIG?!

I WAS BEHIND LINDSEY, WITH HER ALL THE WAY-- UNTIL I GOT A LOOK AT COFFEY. HE COULD HAVE BEEN THE H.P.N.S. POSTER BOY.



COFFEY WAS TEETERING ON THE EDGE, AND ALL IT WOULD TAKE WOULD BE ONE PUSH FROM LINDSEY...



MY DUTY SUPERCEDES CONCERN FOR THIS INSTALLATION. AS YOU SAW FOR YOURSELF, THE SOVIETS HAVE ALREADY MADE ONE ATTEMPT--

SOVIETS?!
COFFEY, WHAT I SAW WAS NO MORE RUSSIAN THAN--

LINDSEY! BUD!



WE JUST GOT WORD FROM TOPSIDE-- THE STORM IS GETTING WORSE. WE'VE GOT TO UNHOOK THE UMBILICAL-- NOW!

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I'D EVER BEEN THANKFUL FOR A LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY!

THE UMBILICAL WAS OUR LIFE-LINE. IT SUPPLIED DEEPCORE WITH POWER, COMMUNICATIONS, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY-- *AIR*.



WE COULD SURVIVE FOR LIMITED PERIODS WITHOUT IT, BUT LINCOUPLING WASN'T AN OPERATION TO BE DONE IN HASTE-- *ESPECIALLY* IF THERE WERE PROBLEMS TOPSIDE.



THE HEAVE-COMPENSATOR! IT'S GONNA--

LOOK, COFFEY'S IN BAD SHAPE. HE'S EXHIBITING SYMPTOMS OF PRESSURE-INDUCED PSYCHOSIS, AND HE'S GOT A NUCLEAR WEAPON. I THINK IT'D BE A GOOD IDEA TO STAY AS COOL AS--

WHOA!



THE UMBILICAL AND ITS SUPPORT CRANE ON THE EXPLORER WERE NEVER INTENDED TO SUPPORT THE *WEIGHT* OF DEEPCORE. IT WAS RECOGNIZED THAT SUCH A SITUATION MIGHT POSSIBLY OCCUR, BUT IT WAS ALWAYS EXPECTED THAT THE UMBILICAL WOULD SNAP BEFORE THE CRANE.



OF COURSE, IT'D NEVER BEEN PUT TO A PRACTICAL TEST.





TOPSIDE! PAY OUT SOME SLACK--WE'RE GETTING DRAGGED!

BUD! WE'VE LOST THE CRANE!



REPEAT! WE'VE LOST THE CRANE! IT'S ON ITS WAY TO YOU!

IT'S DRIPPING STRAIGHT TO US.



RIG FOR IMPACT! SEAL ALL EXTERIOR HATCHES! MOVE IT! MOVE IT!



I GAVE ORDERS AUTOMATICALLY, KNOWING EVEN AS I GAVE THEM THAT ANY ACTION WOULD BE FUTILE IF THE EXPLORER'S 40-TON CRANE HIT US. IT'D BE LIKE A SLEDGEHAMMER HITTING A SIX-PACK.

WE COULD HEAR THE POUNDING AND THUMPING AS 2000 FEET OF 18-INCH CABLE PILED ON TOP OF US.



WE'D DONE ALL WE COULD. NOW IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME.



WE DIDN'T HAVE LONG TO WAIT.

KWUMP!



YA-HOO!

IT MISSED US!

OH SHIT.

OUR CHEERS DIED IN OUR THROATS AS WE WATCHED THE CRANE SLIDE OVER THE EDGE OF THE TRENCH. WE DIDN'T NEED OUR ENGINEERING DEGREES TO REALIZE IT'D DRAG DEEPCORE JUST LIKE ONE OF THOSE "WALKING" TOYS WHOSE WEIGHTED STRINGS PULL THEM UNTIL THEY REACH THE EDGE OF THE TABLE. ONLY DEEPCORE WAS NEVER DESIGNED TO "WALK," AND THERE WAS NO GUARANTEE IT'D STOP WHEN IT REACHED THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS.

DEEPCORE'S ADVANCE TOWARD THE TRENCH WAS HALTED WHEN IT SLAMMED INTO AN OUTCROPPING OF ROCK. I GUESS YOU COULD SAY WE WERE **LUCKY**--

BUT IT WASN'T LUCKY FOR *EVERYONE*. **FINLER**, **DIETZ** AND **MCWHIRTER** WERE IN THE SECTION WHERE DEEPCORE'S HULL **RAMMED** THE OUTCROPPING.

...AND BEFORE THE THREE MEN IN THE ROOM COULD ESCAPE.

CLANG

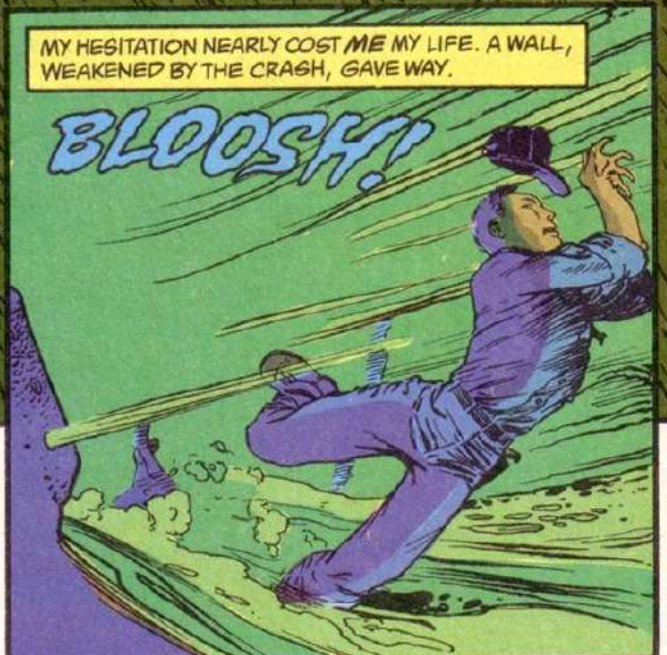
THE AUTOMATIC DOORS WORKED JUST AS DESIGNED--SEALING OFF THE RUPTURED SECTION OF THE RIG BEFORE THE **WHOLE** OF DEEPCORE WAS FLOODED...



I SHOULD HAVE RUN--GOTTEN MYSELF BEYOND THE NEXT BULKHEAD, JUST IN CASE. BUT ALL I COULD DO WAS STARE AT THREE MEN...THREE **FRIENDS** WHOSE LIVES HAD BEEN **MY** RESPONSIBILITY.

MY HESITATION NEARLY COST **ME** MY LIFE. A WALL, WEAKENED BY THE CRASH, GAVE WAY.

BLOOSH!





EVEN IF I *REACHED* THE DOOR, THERE WAS NO WAY I COULD STOP IT FROM *CLOSING*...

THEN A MIRACLE HAPPENED. ONLY AN *M.I.T.* GRAD LIKE LINDSEY WOULD'VE PICKED *TITANIUM* FOR A WEDDING BAND.

KA-CHING!

CUT THE HYDRAULIC LINES!

I'M CUTTIN'! I'M CUTTIN'!



ONLY LINDSEY.

THE SITUATION WAS LESS-THAN-PERFECT AFTER THAT. WE'D LOST FOUR, COFFEY'D LOST TWO--WITH ANOTHER LAID UP WITH A BUSTED LEG. I DIDN'T CARE TO THINK WHAT THAT MIGHT DO TO HIS ALREADY DETERIORATING CONDITION. WE HAD OTHER PROBLEMS--LEAKS TO PATCH, POWER TO RESTORE, AND ONE OTHER MAJOR CONCERN... AIR.



HOOK UP **HERE**, CATFISH. THERE'S SOME TANKS ON THE OTHER SIDE--I'LL CHECK THEM OUT.

WHILE I TENDED TO THE WOUNDED AND COUNTED THE DEAD, LINDSEY AND CATFISH WENT OUTSIDE TO SALVAGE WHAT THEY COULD, UNTIL HURRICANE FREDERICK BLEW ITSELF OUT, WE COULD EXPECT NO HELP FROM ABOVE.



BUT, ACCORDING TO LINDSEY, AFTER SHE RETURNED FROM HER DIVE, WE MIGHT'VE BEEN EXPECTING SOME HELP FROM...



...BELOW.



THE ONLY PROBLEM WAS, NO ONE ELSE SAW ANYTHING. I WAS ALREADY CERTAIN COFFEY WAS SUFFERING FROM H.P.N.S.--I DIDN'T WANT TO HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT LINDSEY, TOO.

LOOK AT ME. DO I SEEM STRESSED? ANY SYMPTOMS OF PRESSURE SICKNESS? ANY **TREMORS? SLURRED SPEECH?**



WELL, NO, BUT... LINDSEY, WHAT YOU'RE DESCRIBING IS--

--IS **NOT** HUMAN. GET IT? I'M TALKING ABOUT A NON-TERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE.



NON-TERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCES. NTIS. YEAH!

EVERYONE HAD THEIR OWN OPINION ABOUT WHAT LINDSEY SAID SHE'D SEEN. WE DIDN'T KNOW THAT A FEW HOURS LATER SOMETHING WOULD HAPPEN THAT WOULD PUT AN END TO **ALL** DISCUSSION.



THAT THEY WERE **NON-TERRESTRIAL** THERE WAS NO MORE DOUBT...



AND THEY WERE APPARENTLY AS CURIOUS ABOUT US AS WE WERE ABOUT THEM.



I THINK IT LIKES YOU.



I FIGURED THIS WOULD CHANGE EVERYTHING...

EVEN IN **HIS** CONDITION, THIS WOULD HAVE TO CHANGE COFFEY'S BELIEF THAT WE WERE BEING "INCURRED UPON" BY RUSSIAN SUBMERSIBLES.



WHAT I HADN'T FIGURED ON WAS WHAT OTHER THOUGHTS THE INCIDENT MIGHT TRIGGER IN COFFEY'S MESSED-UP BRAIN.

SLAM!



THEY MUST'VE LEARNED HOW TO CONTROL WATER-- PUT IT UNDER INTELLIGENT CONTROL.

MAYBE THEIR WHOLE TECHNOLOGY IS BASED ON THAT.



YEAH, AND THAT THING WAS THEIR VERSION OF AN R.O.V.*-- LIKE BIG GEEK! THEY WERE CHECKING US OUT.

*REMOTELY OPERATED VEHICLE

I HOPE THEY DON'T JUDGE THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE OFF OF US...

SAY, DO YOU THINK THEY'RE FROM DOWN THERE? OR, YOU KNOW...

THEY'RE FROM SOME PLACE WITH SIMILAR CONDITIONS-- COLD, INTENSE PRESSURE, NO LIGHT.



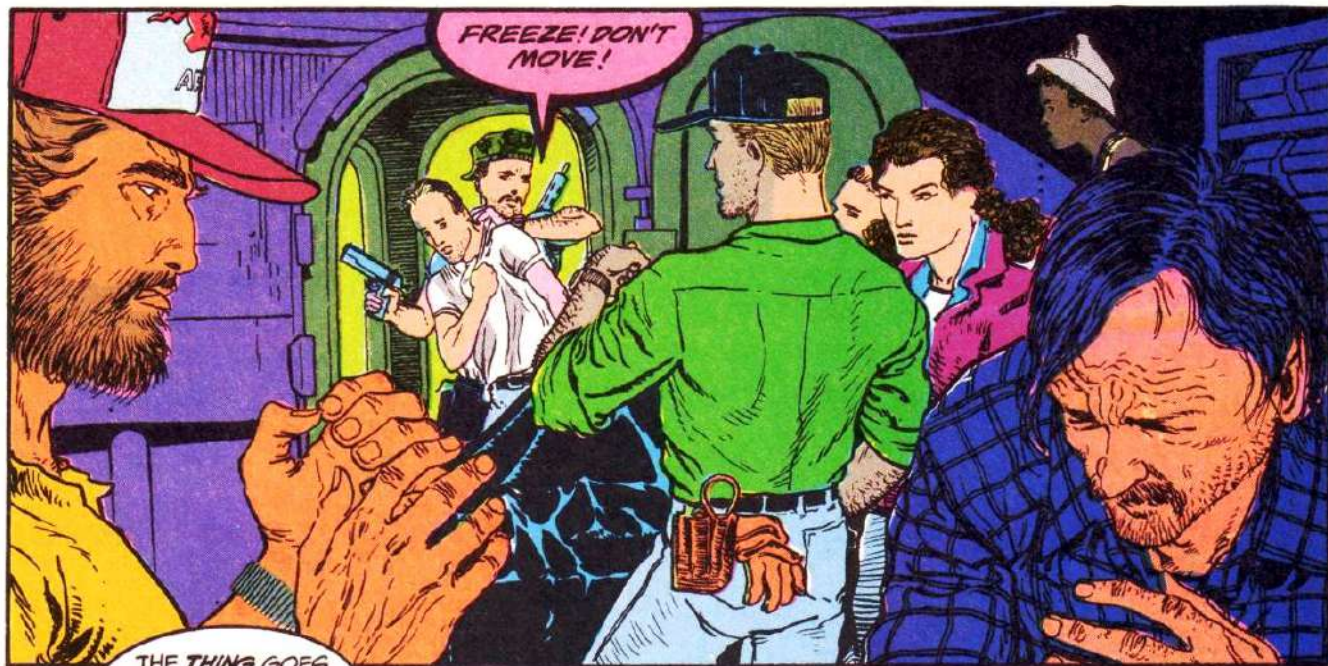
AT THAT MOMENT, HIPPY WAS MAKING A DISCOVERY OF HIS OWN IN THE SUB BAY...



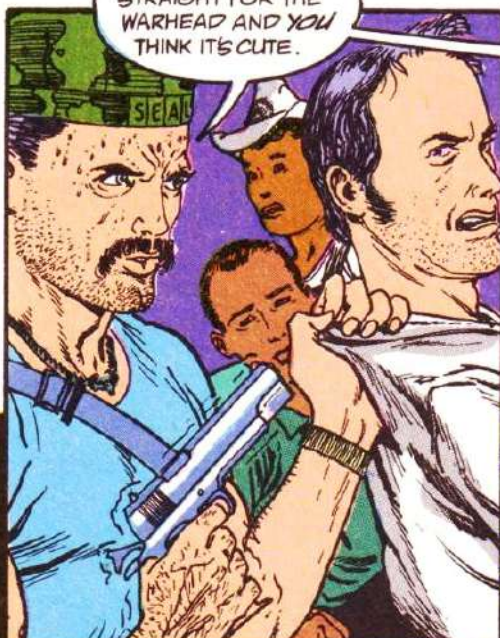
WHAT THE--

SNIFF SOMETHING DID YOU, RAT BOY?





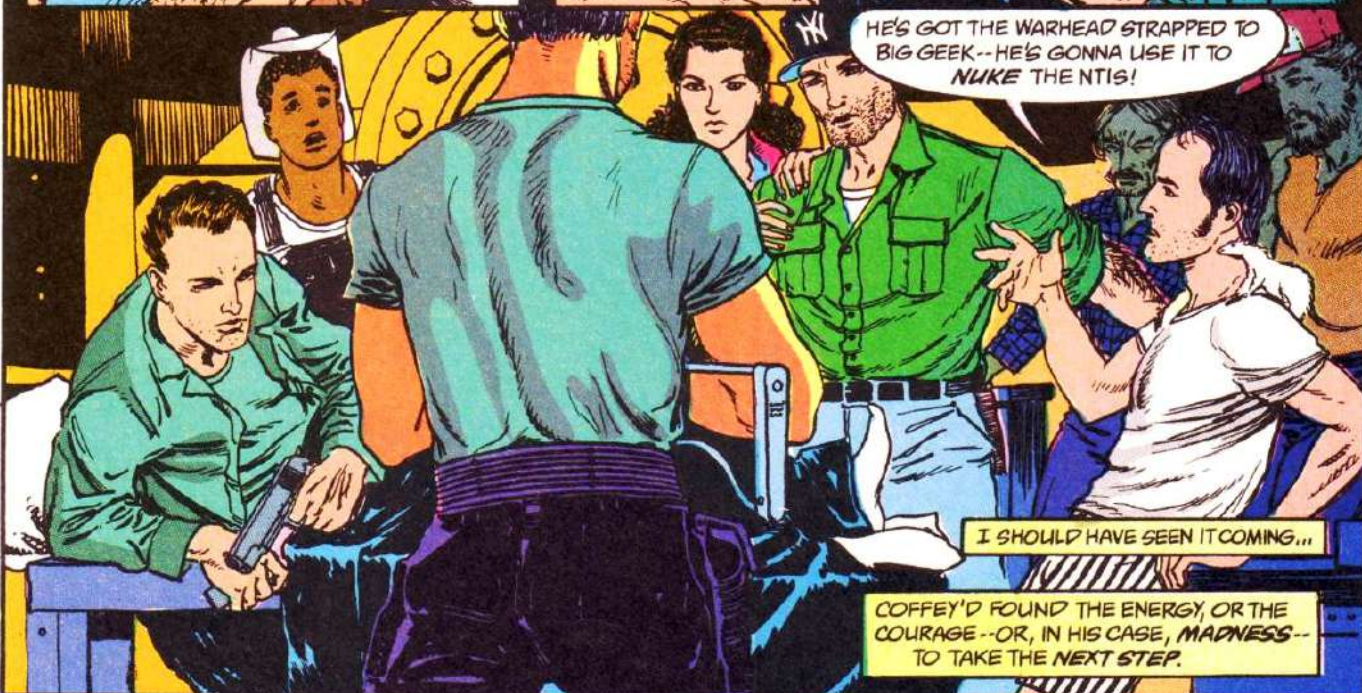
THE *THING* GOES STRAIGHT FOR THE WARHEAD AND YOU THINK IT'S CUTE.



HOLD THIS, MONK. COVER THEM.



WE'RE GOING TO PHASE THREE.



I SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT COMING...

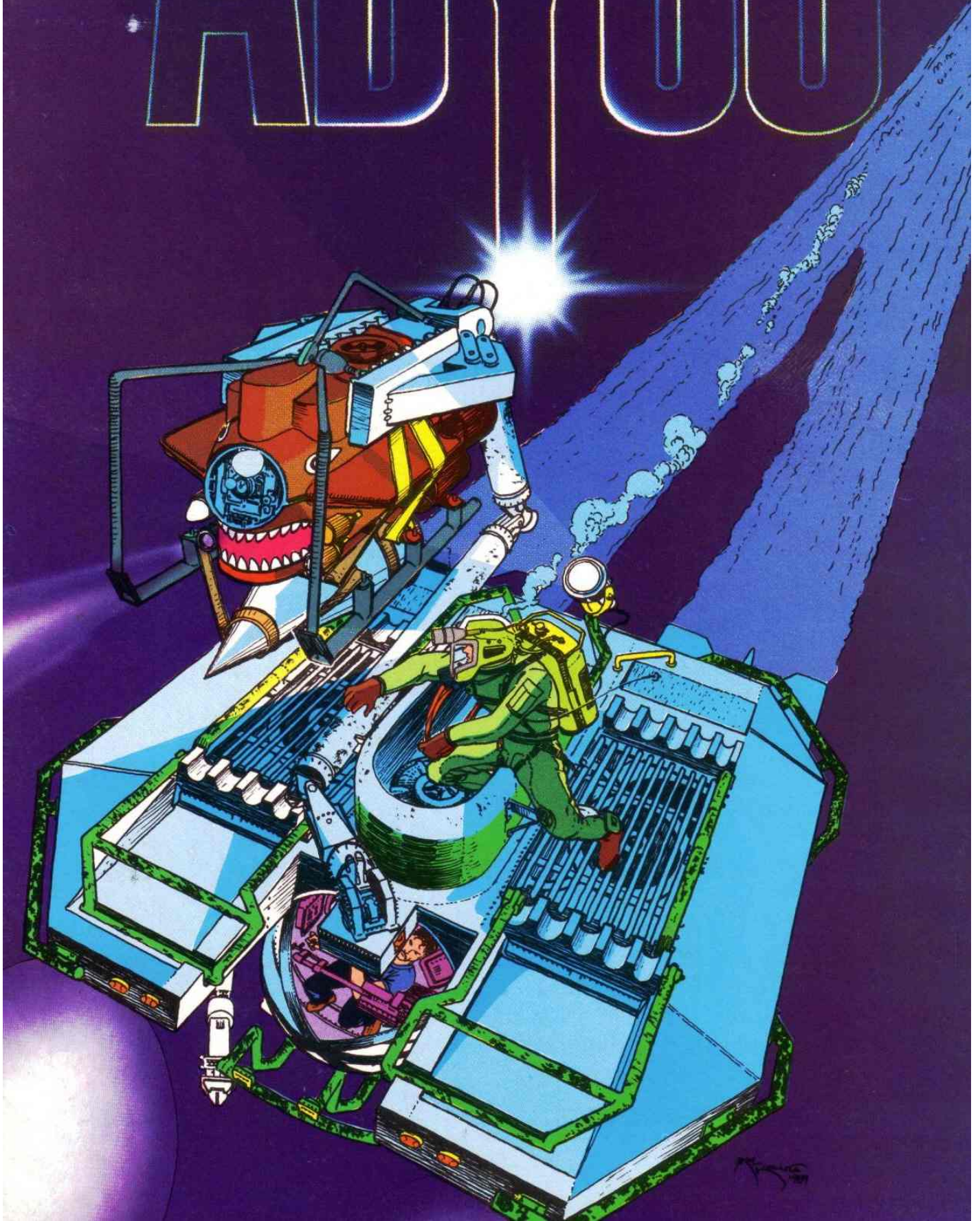
COFFEY'D FOUND THE ENERGY, OR THE COURAGE--OR, IN HIS CASE, MADNESS--TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP.

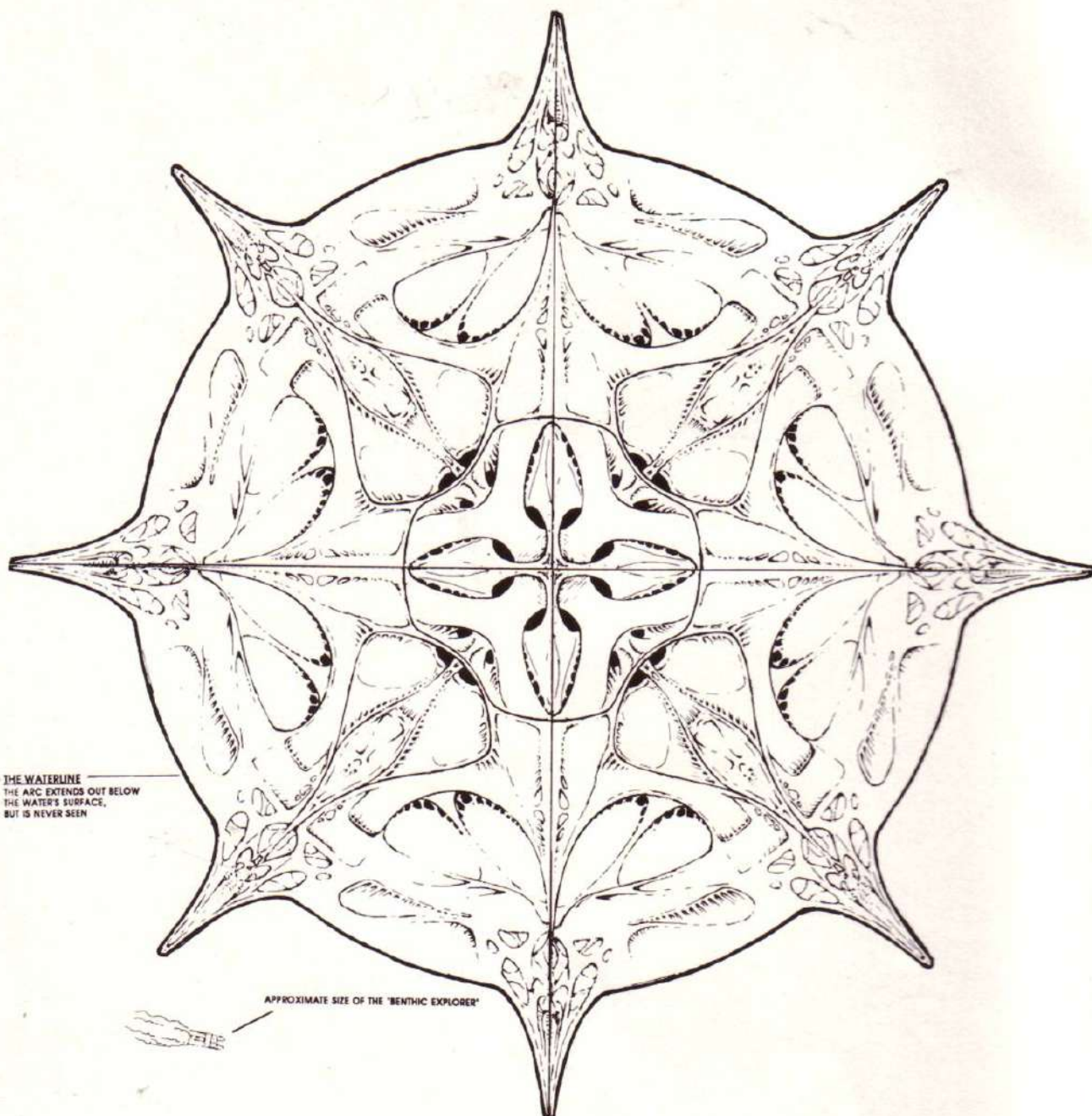
"THE ABYSS" CONCLUDES IN PART TWO, ON SALE IN TWO WEEKS!



2 (of 2)
\$2.25 U.S.
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THE ABYSS

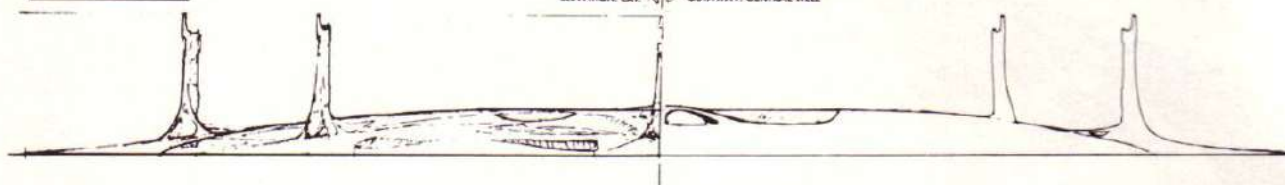




ABYSS - N.T.I. DOME - ONE QUADRANT (IT'S QUADRILATERALLY SYMMETRICAL.)

SCALE: 1" = 375'; 1" = 4,500'

ELEVATION: EXT. < > CUTAWAY: CENTRAL WELL



TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX Presents A DARK HORSE COMICS Adaptation of A JAMES CAMERON Film
 SCREENPLAY BY RANDY STRADLEY ILLUSTRATED BY MICHAEL KALUTA COLORED BY RANDY STRADLEY LETTERED BY TODD KLEIN
 ADAPTED BY RANDY STRADLEY
 WITH PRODUCTION DRAWINGS BY MOEBIUS AND STEVE BURG ADDITIONAL TEXT BY VAN LING SPECIAL CONSULTANTS PAMELA NORTH AND ANNE MARIE STEIN
 PRODUCTION MANAGER CHRIS CHALENOR PRODUCTION JIM BRADRICK DEBBIE BYRD JERRY PROSSER AND JIM SPIVEY
 PUBLISHER MIKE RICHARDSON EDITOR RANDY STRADLEY OPERATIONS DIRECTOR NEIL HANKERSON
 SPECIAL THANKS TO JAMES CAMERON HILBERT HAKIM GALE ANNE HURD VAN LING JEAN-MARC LOFFICIER
 LEE MOYER PAMELA NORTH PHILLIP NORWOOD ANNE MARIE STEIN AND CLIFFORD WERBER
 *SPECIAL ASSISTANTS CHRIS CHALENOR LOUISE KIM JACK POLLOCK AND JIM SPIVEY

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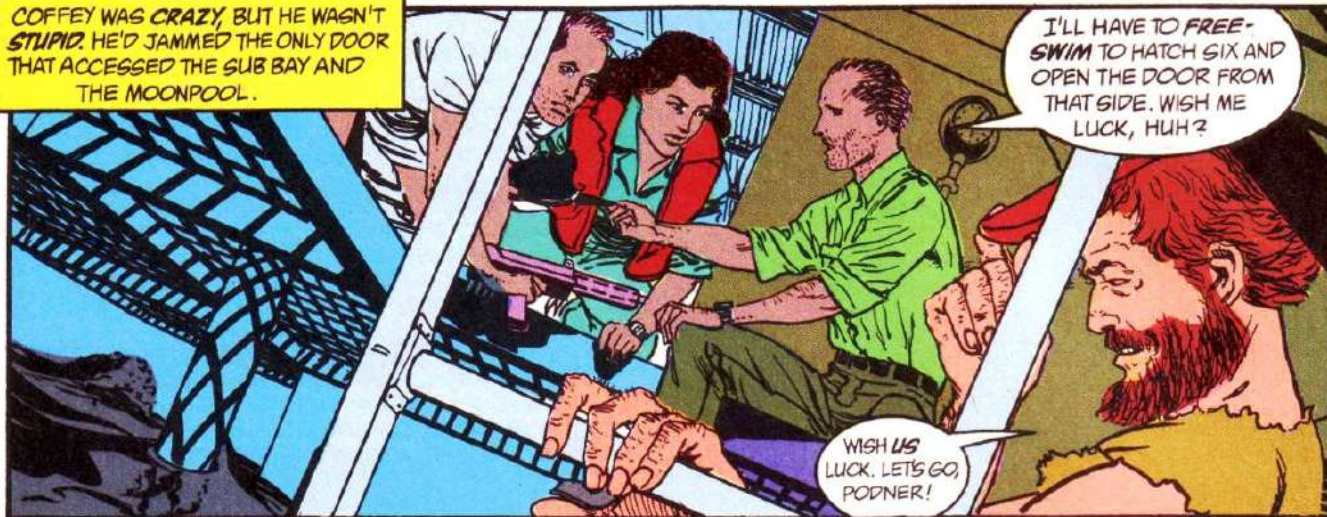
IT *SHOULD* HAVE BEEN A TIME FOR CELEBRATING. WE'D *DISCOVERED*--OR BEEN DISCOVERED BY-- SOME UNKNOWN INTELLIGENCE--A *NON-TERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE*, LINDSEY CALLED THEM. SOMETHING THAT WAS AS AT HOME IN THE CRUSHING DEPTHS OF: THE CAYMAN TROUGH AS WE WERE ON A SUNNY BEACH.

THEY HAD TECHNOLOGY BEYOND ANYTHING WE'D *DREAMED OF*--APPARENTLY ABLE TO CONTROL WATER AT A MOLECULAR LEVEL. IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN *BREAKTHROUGH TIME*--A CHANCE FOR MANKIND TO TAKE A GIANT STRIDE *FORWARD*.

INSTEAD, LIEUTENANT COFFEY WAS GOING TO DROP A *FIFTY KILOTON NUKIE* ON THEIR HEADS.



COFFEY WAS CRAZY, BUT HE WASN'T STUPID. HE'D JAMMED THE ONLY DOOR THAT ACCESSED THE SUB BAY AND THE MOONPOOL.



I'LL HAVE TO FREE-SWIM TO HATCH SIX AND OPEN THE DOOR FROM THAT SIDE. WISH ME LUCK, HUH?

WISH US LUCK. LET'S GO, PODNER!

THE WATER AT 2000 FEET IS ABOUT FOUR DEGREES ABOVE FREEZING. IF YOU'RE ABLE TO GET PAST THE INITIAL SHOCK WITHOUT INHALING HALF THE OCEAN, YOUR TROUBLES ARE JUST BEGINNING.



ALMOST INSTANTLY, YOUR JOINTS BEGIN TO STIFFEN, YOUR HEAD ACHES... CONCENTRATION BECOMES AS DIFFICULT AS MOVEMENT. SURVIVAL TIME IS MEASURED IN MINUTES-- AND THAT'S WITH AN ADEQUATE AIR SUPPLY.



INNER HATCH -- *gasp* STUCK... HAFTA... GO ON... TO MOONPOOL.

I CAN'T... MAKE IT... PODNER.



I DIDN'T BLAME CATFISH FOR TURNING BACK-- I WASN'T SURE I COULD MAKE IT MYSELF. BUT I'D ALREADY LOST HALF MY CREW --I COULDN'T LET COFFEY DOOM THE OTHERS WITHOUT AT LEAST TRYING TO STOP HIM.



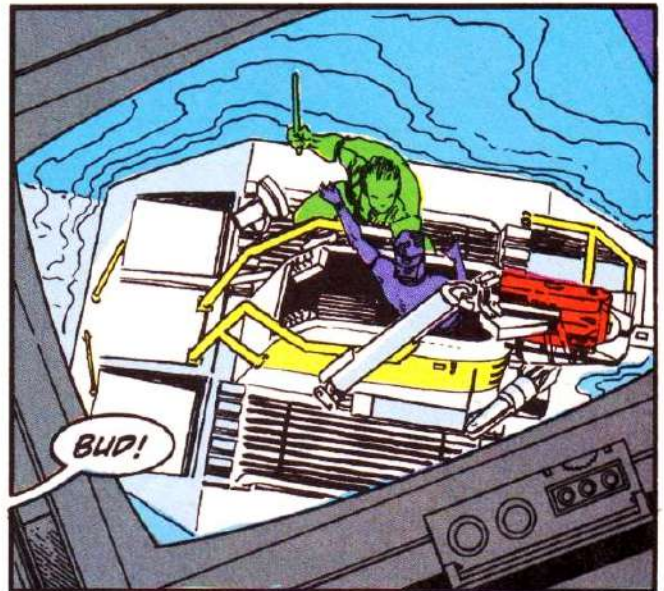


LUCK WAS WITH ME. COFFEY WAS CLAMPING BIG GEEK AND THE WARHEAD ONTO FLATBED. THE SOUND OF THE CHAINFALL COVERED MY ARRIVAL.



BUD'S GONNA TRY TO TAKE COFFEY HIMSELF!

COFFEY'S A TRAINED KILLER! EVEN BUD'S NOT THAT DUMB.



WRESTLING WITH COFFEY WAS LIKE GOING ONE-ON-ONE WITH A LION. THE FACT THAT I WAS ALREADY NUMB WITH COLD DIDN'T HELP.



I DID THE ONLY THING I COULD THINK OF TO EVEN THE ODDS.



IF COFFEY TOOK AS LONG TO RECOVER AS A NORMAL MAN, I'D HAVE HAD ALL THE TIME I NEEDED. ANOTHER TWO SECONDS AND I'D HAVE THE DOOR OPEN.



INSTEAD, HE WAS ON ME BEFORE I'D COVERED HALF THE DISTANCE. IT LOOKED LIKE IN ANOTHER TWO SECONDS I'D BE DEAD.



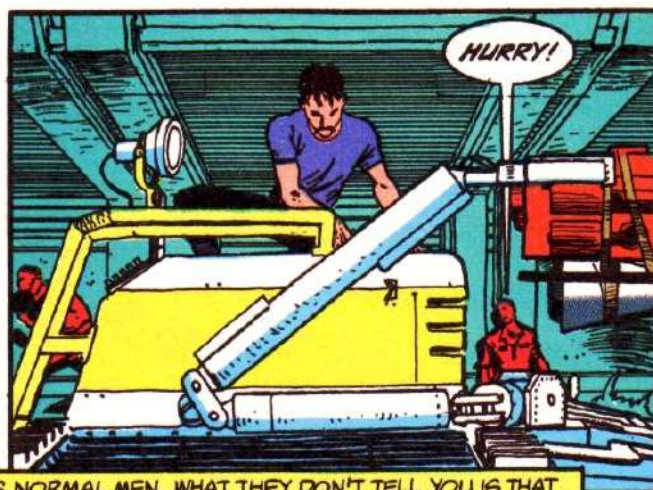
I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF REMOVING THE CLIP BEFORE I GAVE COFFEY HIS PISTOL.



GUN OR NO, COFFEY WAS MOPPING THE FLOOR WITH ME, AND THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO TO STOP HIM.

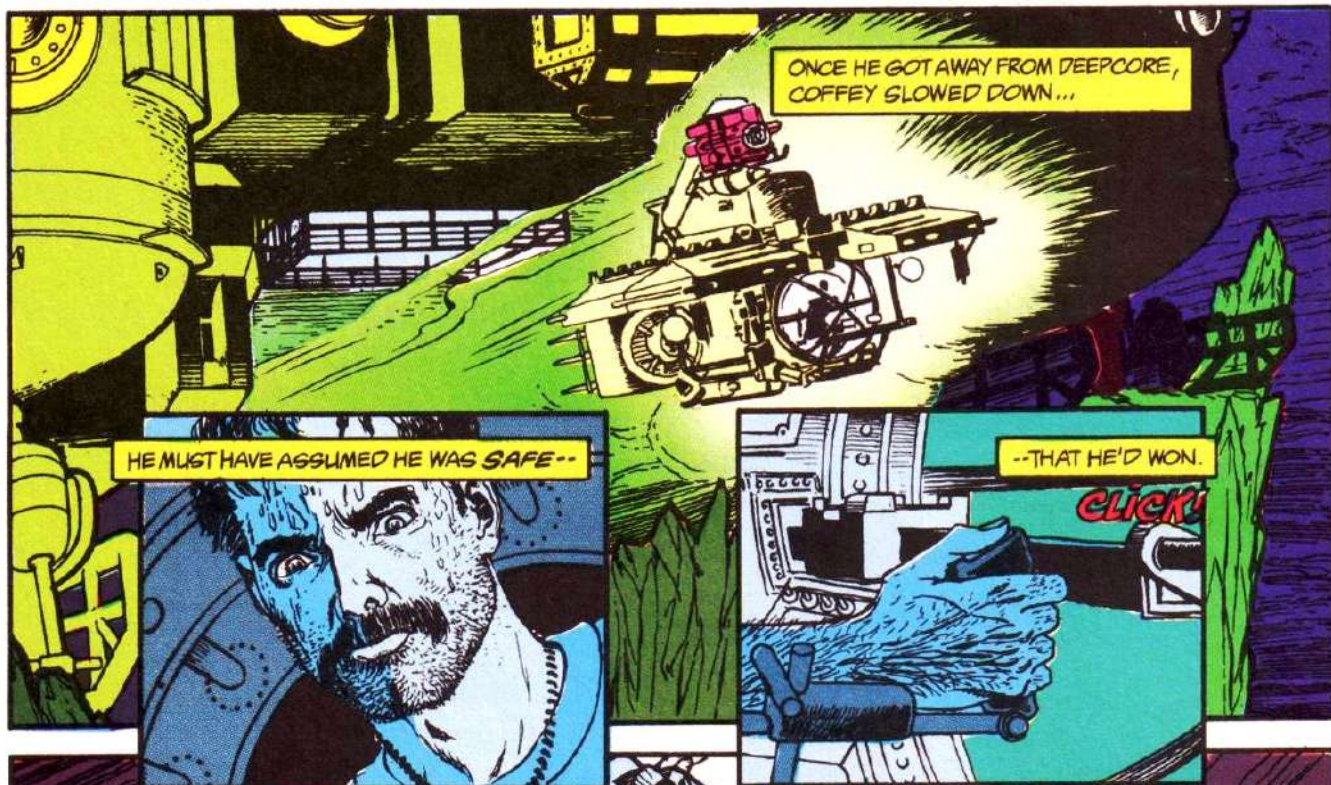


HEY!



THEY SAY THAT MADMEN ARE THREE TIMES AS STRONG AS NORMAL MEN. WHAT THEY DON'T TELL YOU IS THAT THEY'RE ALSO THREE TIMES AS FAST. COFFEY'D ALREADY MADE IT TO FLATBED. ONCE HE GOT THE PUMPS STARTED HE'D BE GONE.





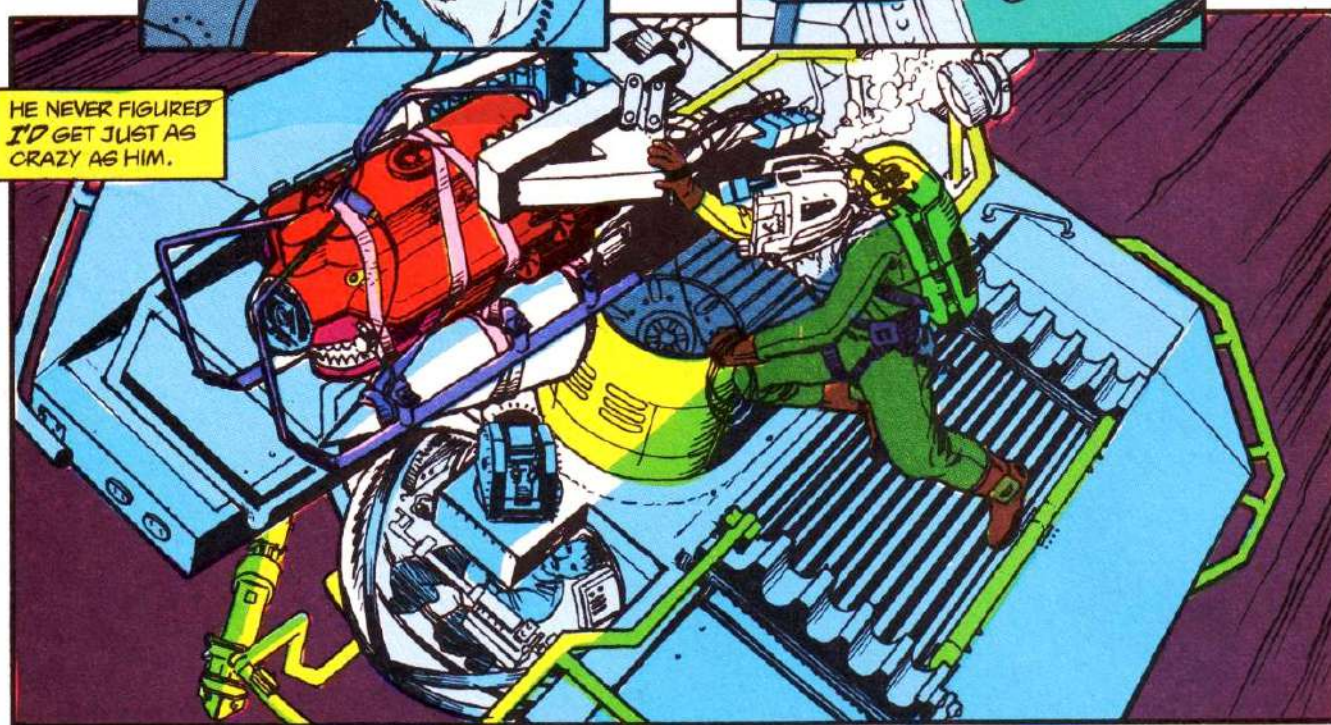
ONCE HE GOT AWAY FROM DEEPCORE,
COFFEY SLOWED DOWN...

HE MUST HAVE ASSUMED HE WAS **SAFE**--

--THAT HE'D WON.

CLICK!

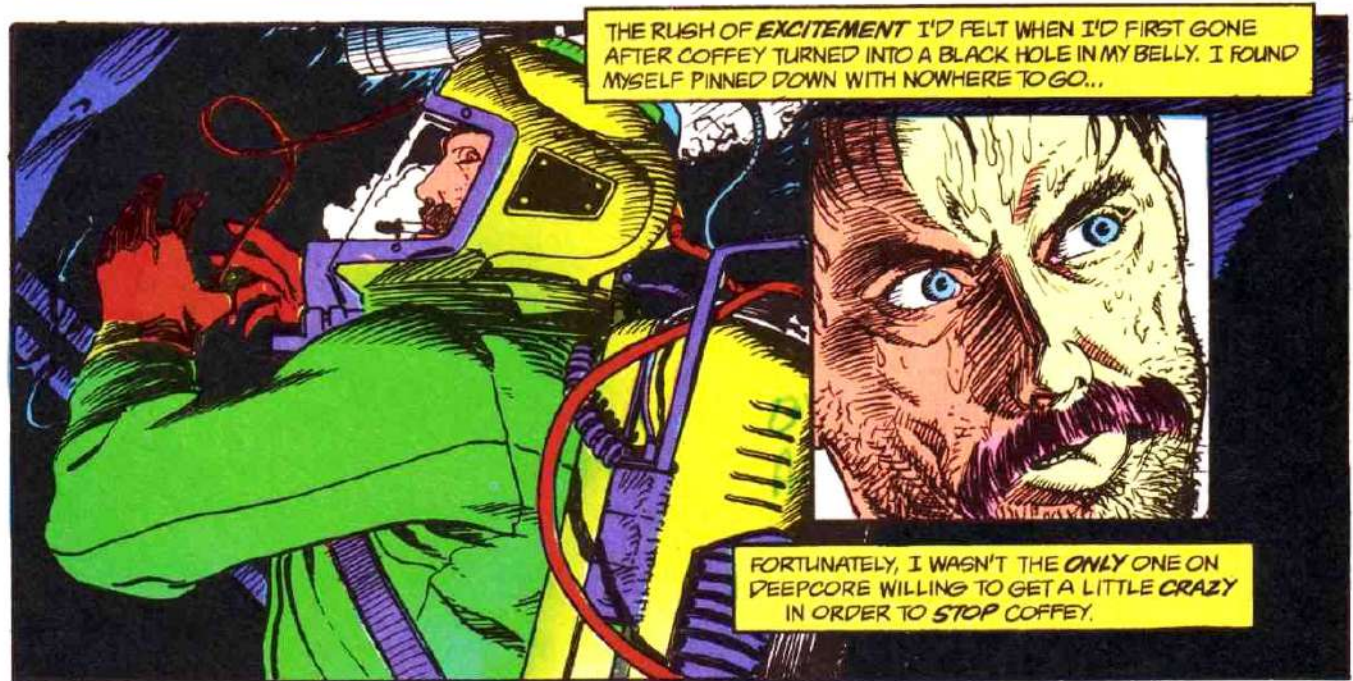
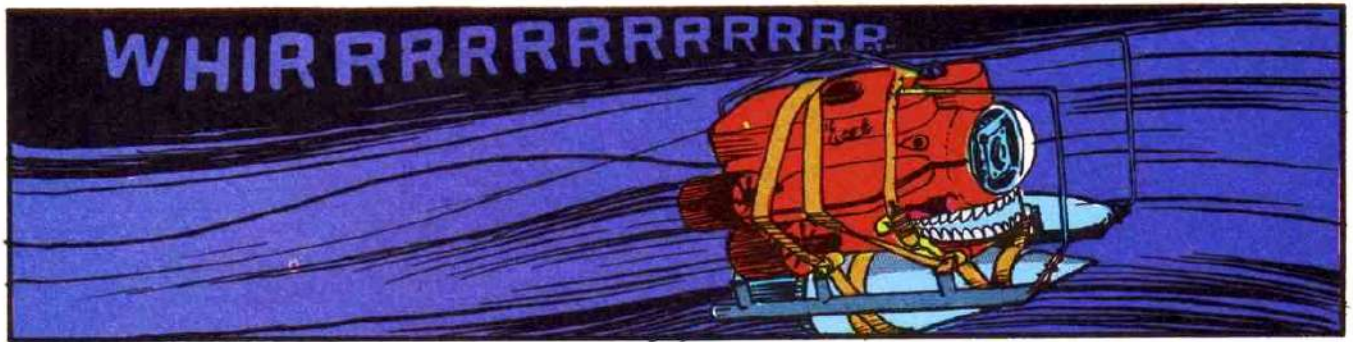
HE NEVER FIGURED
I'D GET JUST AS
CRAZY AS HIM.

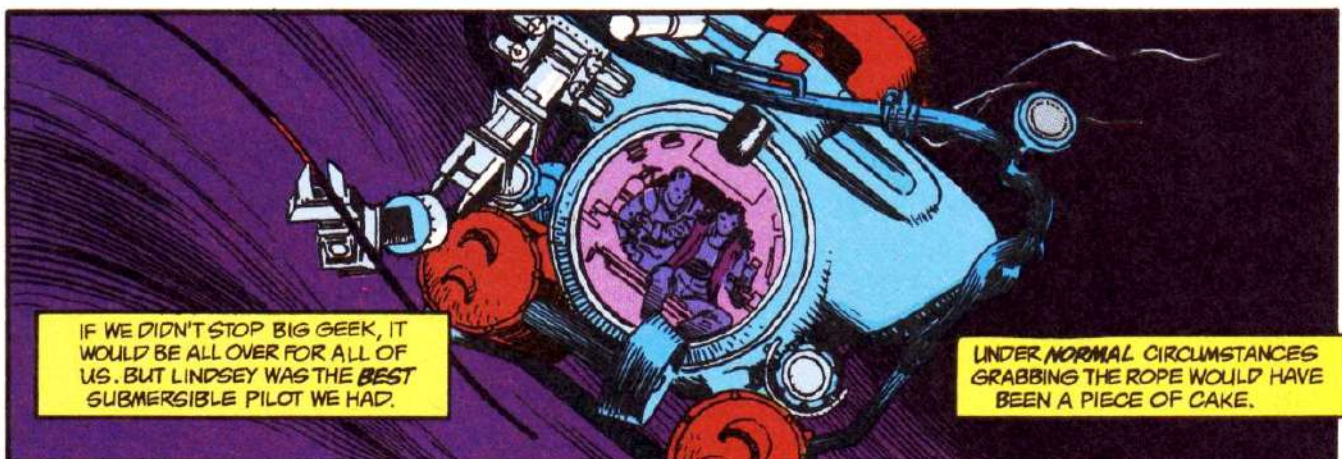
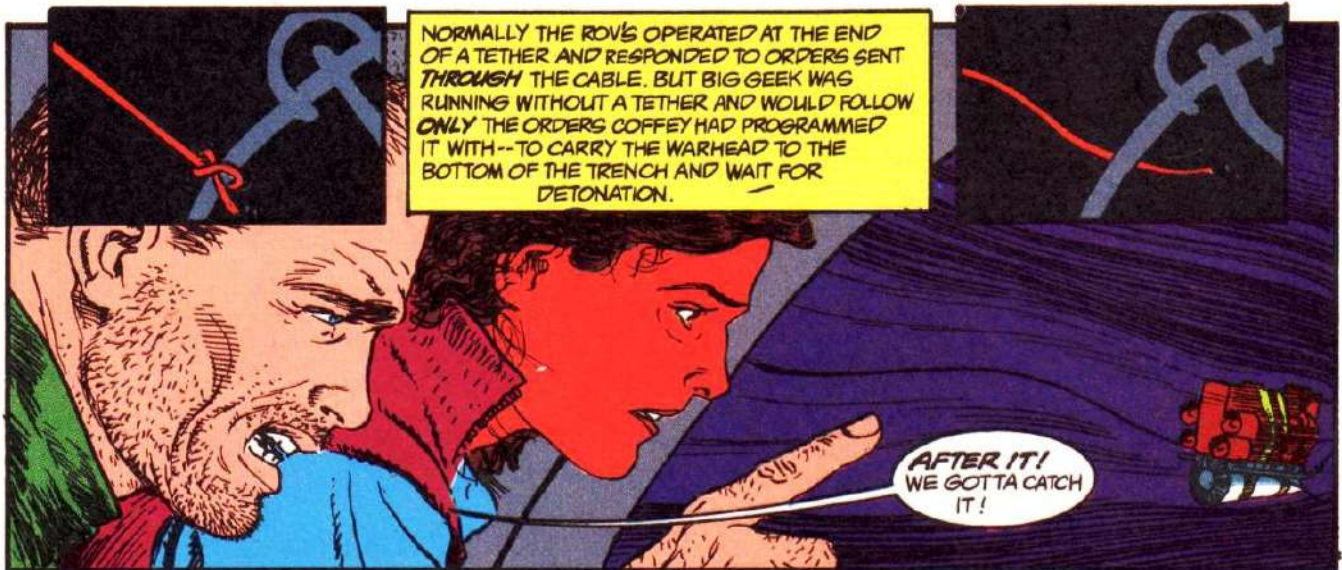
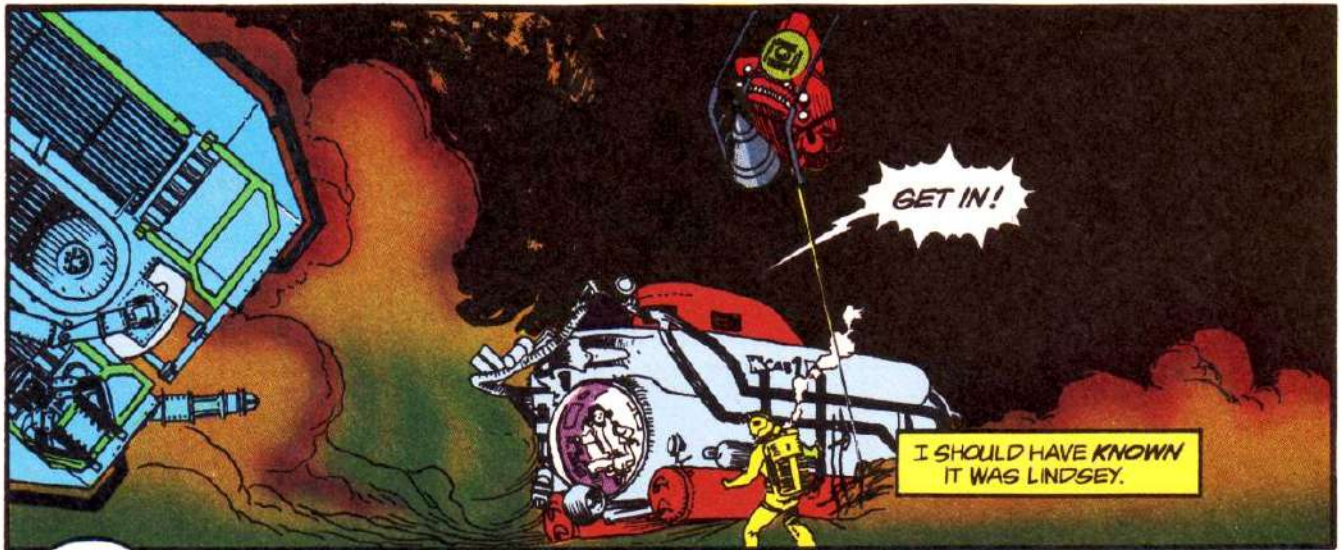


I WAS PLAYING A LONG SHOT. I HAD TO HOPE I COULD
FIND A TIE-DOWN FOR MY END OF THE ROPE BEFORE
COFFEY STARTED BIG GEEK--

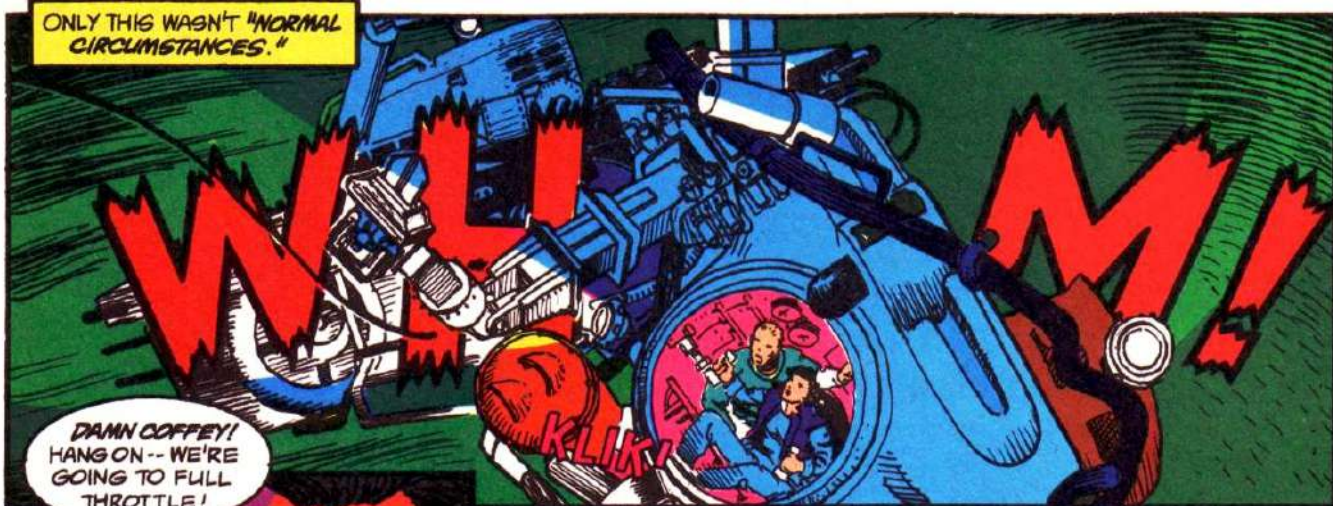


--BECAUSE ONCE BIG GEEK STARTED MOVING, IT'D BE
LIKE TRYING TO HOLD BACK A WILD ANIMAL.





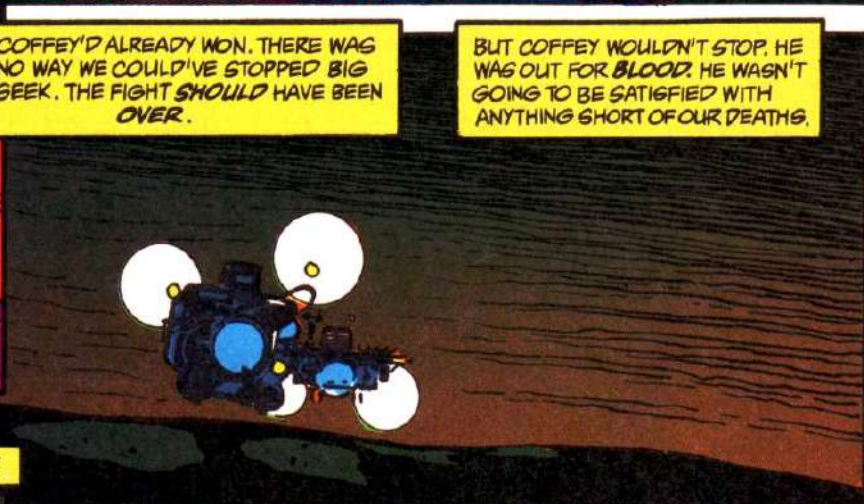
ONLY THIS WASN'T "NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES."



DAMN COFFEY!
HANG ON-- WE'RE
GOING TO FULL
THROTTLE!

COFFEY'D ALREADY WON. THERE WAS
NO WAY WE COULD'VE STOPPED BIG
GEEK. THE FIGHT *SHOULD* HAVE BEEN
OVER.

BUT COFFEY WOULDN'T STOP. HE
WAS OUT FOR *BLOOD*. HE WASN'T
GOING TO BE SATISFIED WITH
ANYTHING SHORT OF OUR DEATHS.



BUT HE WAS ALSO PISSING LINDSEY OFF.

ALL
RIGHT.
FINE.

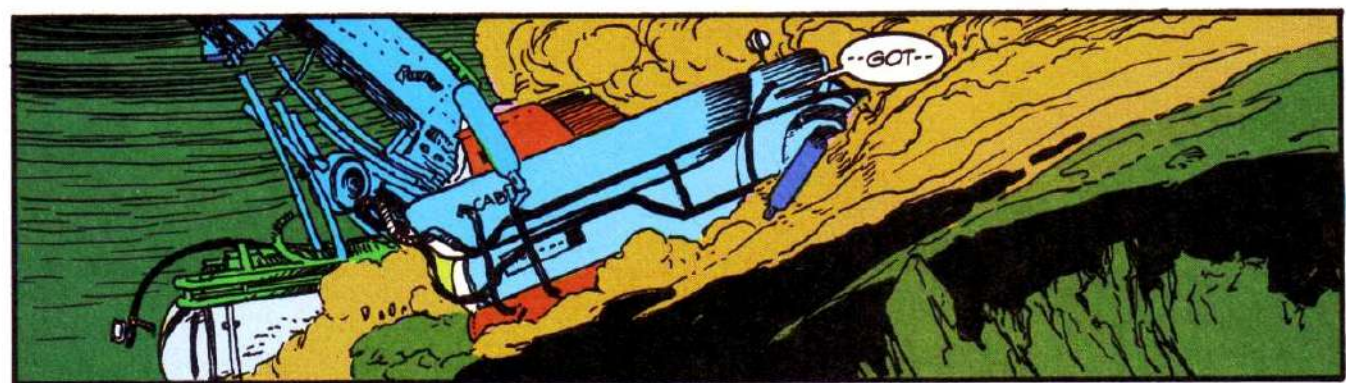
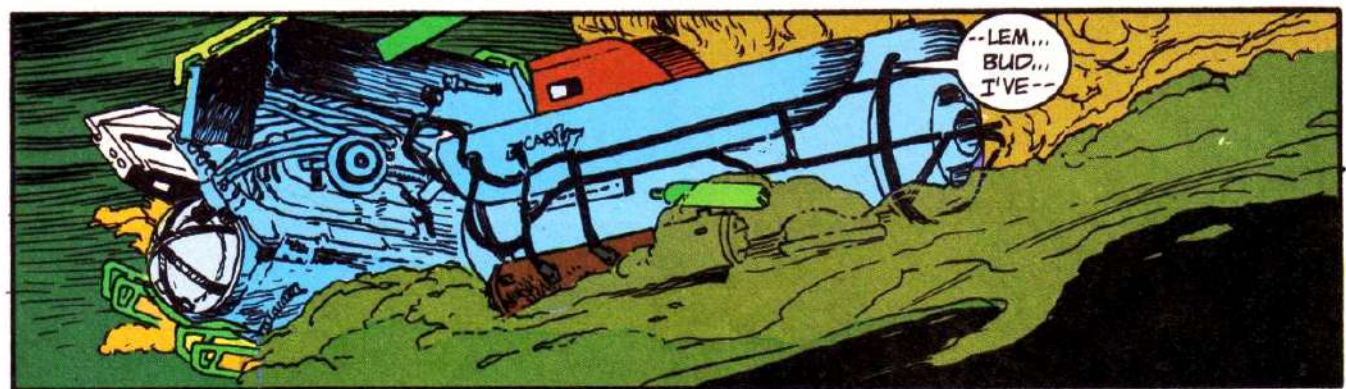
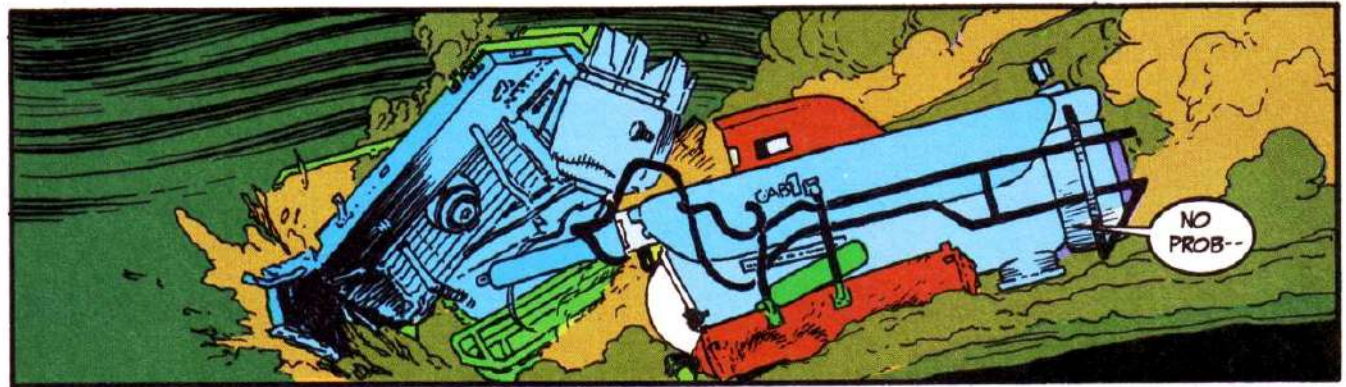
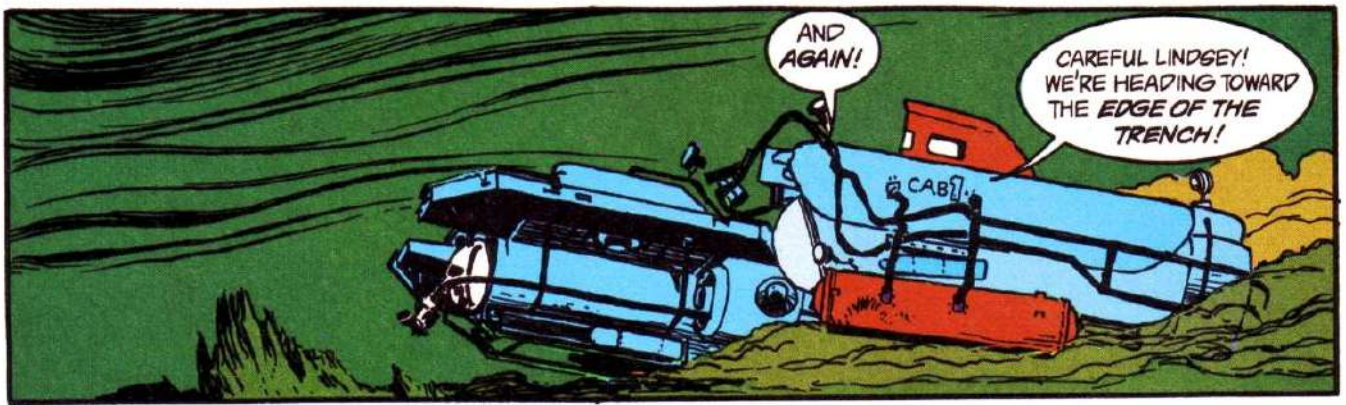


AND *THAT* WAS HIS MISTAKE.



LET'S SEE
HOW YOU LIKE
THIS.





COFFEY KEPT RIGHT ON GOING--
OUT OF CONTROL.

HIS DEATH COULDN'T HAVE
BEEN A PEACEFUL ONE.

THE END, WHEN IT FINALLY CAME, WAS PROBABLY QUICK. BUT THERE HAD TO HAVE BEEN A LONG MOMENT OF ANTICIPATION...
LISTENING TO THE HULL GROAN AS THE PRESSURE INTENSIFIED OUTSIDE... LISTENING AS RIVETS POPPED AND SUPPORTS
WHINED UNDER THE LOAD...

WATCHING AS THE FRONT BUBBLE PORT BEGAN TO CRACK... WAITING FOR THE MOMENT WHEN IT WOULD GIVE WAY AND THE ICY
WATER OUTSIDE WOULD RUSH IN AND CRUSH HIS BODY TO A PULP...

WOULD IT BE THIS SECOND?

...OR WOULD IT BE THE NEXT?

NO, IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN A PEACEFUL
DEATH.

I DIDN'T REALIZE IT, BUT I WAS
ABOUT TO FIND OUT THAT NO
DEATH IS A PEACEFUL ONE.

DEEPOORE, THIS IS
CAB ONE. WE NEED
ASSISTANCE...

NOTHING.

WE
TOALED
IT, huh?

HIPPY AND
THE OTHERS WILL
COME OUT AFTER
US.

YEAH, BUT ITS
GONNA TAKE THEM A
WHILE TO FIND US.
WE'D BETTER GET
THIS FLOODING
STOPPED.



THIS IS
INSANE.

BUT, AS *ALWAYS*, LINDSEY WAS RIGHT. IT WAS A TEXTBOOK SITUATION. THE WATER WAS NEAR FREEZING. EVEN AS SHE DROWNED, LINDSEY'S TEMPERATURE WOULD *DROP*. HER BODY WOULD GO INTO *DEEP HYPOTHERMIA*--PROTECT HER FROM BRAIN DAMAGE DUE TO OXYGEN STARVATION. IF SHE COULD BE *REVIVED* WITHIN TEN OR FIFTEEN MINUTES SHE'D HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF COMING OUT OF IT ALL RIGHT.

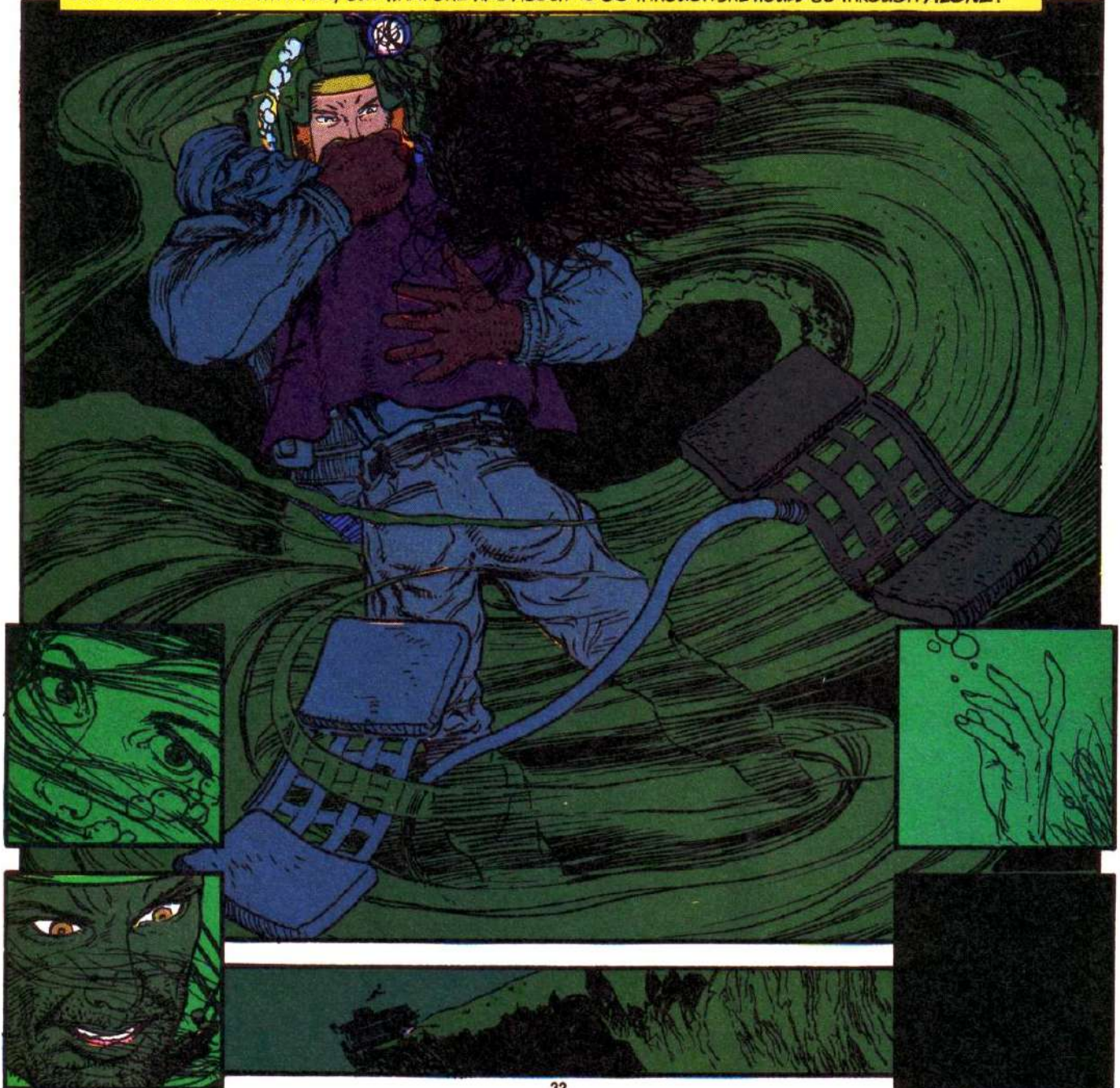
THERE WERE SIMILAR CASES ON RECORD--PEOPLE WHO'D FALLEN THROUGH ICE-COVERED LAKES, THAT SORT OF THING, AND WE HAD THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT TO REVIVE HER ON THE RIG--BUT TO RISK IT *INTENTIONALLY*...

OH, GOD...
LING...

TELL ME
LATER.

THIS IS MAYBE
NOT SUCH A GREAT
PLAN, IS IT? HOLD
ME, BLID...

WITH MY HELMET LOCKED DOWN, I COULDN'T HEAR WHAT SHE WAS SAYING. I DIDN'T NEED TO. SHE WAS SCARED. I WAS *RIGHT THERE* WITH HER, BUT WHAT SHE WAS ABOUT TO GO THROUGH SHE WOULD GO THROUGH *ALONE*.



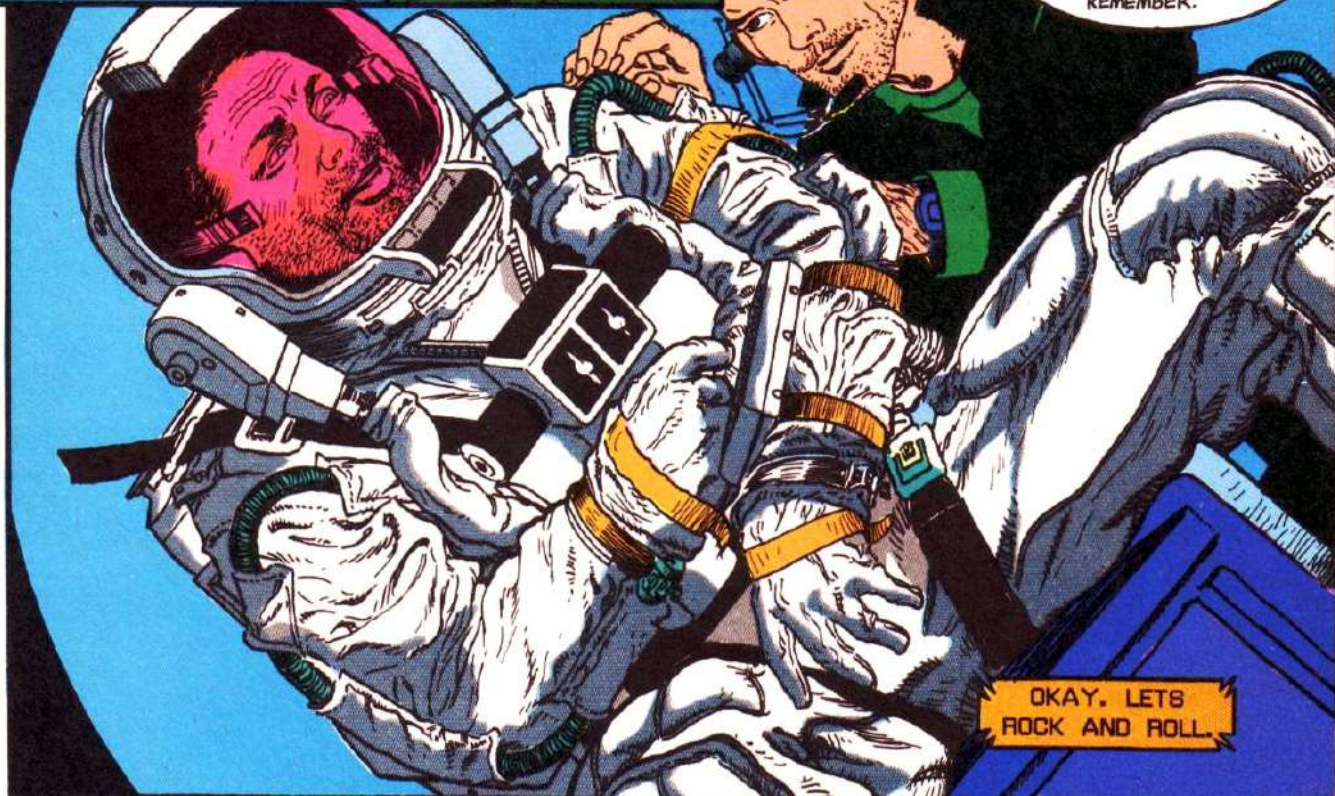
THE TRIP BACK TO DEEPCORE WAS THE LONGEST, LONELIEST SEVEN MINUTES OF MY LIFE. I WAS TERRIFIED... ANXIOUS... ANGRY. I WANTED TO LASH OUT... I WANTED MY FINGERS AROUND COFFEY'S THROAT... ONLY COFFEY WAS ALREADY DEAD... AND SO WAS MY LINDSEY.



IT'S BUD...
OH MY GOD--
THAT'S
LINDSEY!







BREATHING THE FLUID, WITH NO AIR IN MY LUNGS, I COULD CONCEIVABLY GO AS *DEEP* AS I HAD TO WITH NO COMPRESSION PROBLEMS.

ALL I HAD TO DO WAS HANG ON TO LITTLE GEEK AND LET ITS PROGRAMMED COURSE *CARRY* ME TO BIG GEEK AND THE WARHEAD. IN THEORY, I WAS JUST ALONG FOR THE RIDE...

BUD,
ACCORDING
TO MONK HERE,
YOU'VE JUST SET
A NEW RECORD
FOR THE
DEEPEST--

-- BEER
THAT BIKE
TRIP? WE RODE
THE HONDA UP
THROUGH
OREGO--

-- THE
MOST FREE
I'VE EVER
FELT. I'M--

BUT, THE DESCENT BECAME A *REGRESSION*... THE COLD NUMBING ME TO A NERVE-DEAD *FALSE WARMTH*... THE MILES OF OCEAN *ABOVE* ME CRUSHING EVERY CONSCIOUS THOUGHT INTO A SENSELESS *JUMBLE*-- LIKE A TODDLER'S FIRST ATTEMPTS AT SPEECH...

...A WAKING RETURN
TO THE *WOMB*...

SKRUNCH!

LITTLE GEEK GONE

THOUGH LINDSEY'S WORDS-- LIKE RANDOM SNATCHES OF DREAM CONVERSATION-- MADE LITTLE *SENSE* TO ME, THEY WERE A LINK TO THE MEMORY OF *WARMTH* AND *AIR*...

--YOU'RE
NOT ALONE,
BUD--

...AND *LIGHT*.

--THEN
YOU LIT
ANOTHER
CANDLE--

--AND
PUT IT
BESIDE
MINE--

--SO
THERE WERE
TWO CANDLES
IN THE
DARK--

--I'M
WITH YOU...
I'LL ALWAYS
BE WITH
YOU--

--EIGHTEEN
THOUSAND
FEET--

HOW
YOU DOIN',
RODNER?

WHAT
KIND OF
LIGHT?

HE'S
HALLUCI-
NATING
BADLY.

SOM LITE BELOW

LIGHT EVERYWHERE.
BEAUTIFULLL

SUDDENLY, AS IF A SWITCH HAD BEEN THROWN; MY THOUGHTS CLEARED... BIOLUMINESCENT ALGAE DISPELLED THE DARKNESS... DAWN AFTER A STORMY NIGHT... AT A DEPTH WHERE THE PRESSURE AND COLD SHOULD HAVE SNUFFED OUT ALL LIGHT AND ALL LIFE, *BOTH* WERE IN ABUNDANCE.



AND DEATH WAS THERE AS WELL.

AT GEEK

OKAY, BUD, WE WENT OVER THIS. TAKE THE COVER PLATE OFF THE FIRING BOX.



ALL RIGHT. BUD, YOU HAVE TO CUT THE GROUND WIRE, NOT THE LEAD WIRE--

UNSCREWED



--NOT, I REPEAT, NOT THE BLACK WIRE WITH THE YELLOW STRIPE.

-- IT'S THE BLUE WIRE WITH THE WHITE STRIPE--

SNIP!



STILL HERE

BUD, GIVE ME A READING OFF YOUR LIQUID OXYGEN GAUGE!

FIVE MINUTES LEFT



IT TOOK HIM HALF AN HOUR TO GET DOWN THERE--

DROP YOUR WEIGHTS AND START BACK NOW! THE GAUGE COULD BE WRONG--

NO.



THINK I'LL STAY AWHILE. BEAUTIFUL
HERE. WORTH ADMISSION

DON'T CRY BABY. WE KNEW THIS WAS A ONE
WAY TICKET WHEN I PUT THIS THING ON.
BUT YOU KNOW I HAD TO COME.

LOVE YOU WIFE.



I TOLD MYSELF IT WAS ALL RIGHT. I'D
DONE THE RIGHT THING... DONE ALL I
COULD DO...

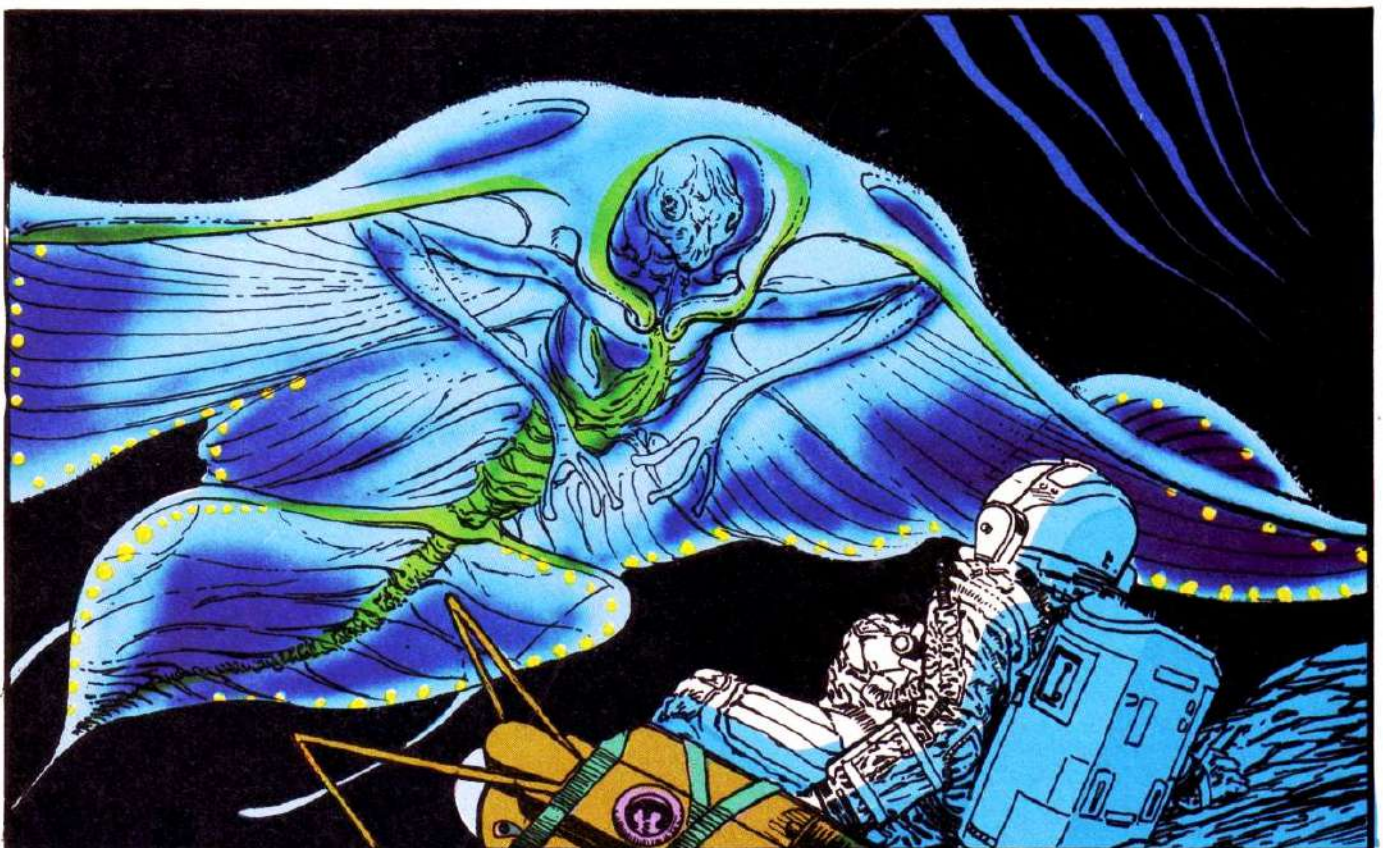


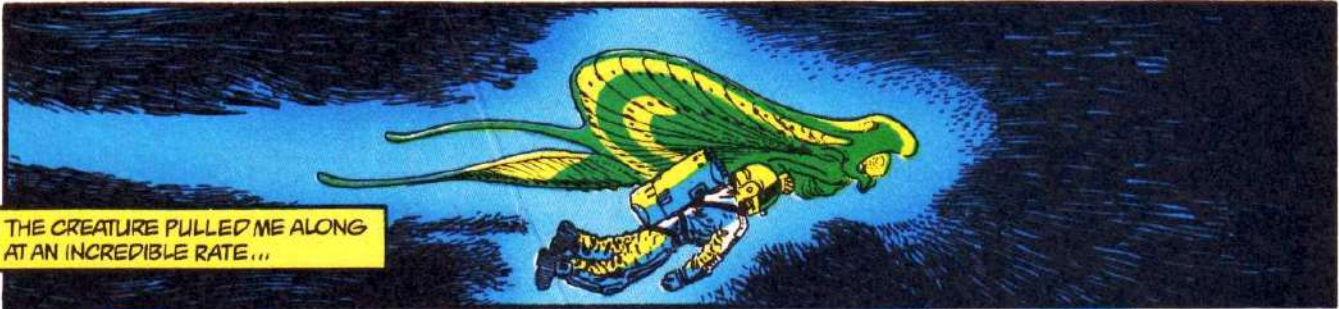
MAYBE I'D DISCOVER THERE WAS SUCH
A THING AS A PEACEFUL DEATH.



ONLY SOMETHING UNEXPECTED HAPPENED...

DEATH WOULD HAVE TO WAIT.






THE CREATURE PULLED ME ALONG
AT AN INCREDIBLE RATE...



...WHILE BELOW, THE ABYSSAL PLAIN
SWEEP BY...A LANDSCAPE FROM
ANOTHER WORLD...




...THE NTI'S HOME AWAY FROM HOME.

THE TRIP THROUGH THE CITY PASSED AS A DREAM. A MINUTE...AN HOUR...WITH NO IDENTIFIABLE PHYSICAL POINT OF REFERENCE, TIME ITSELF LOST ALL MEANING. THE NEXT THING I KNEW, I WAS STANDING ON SOMETHING SOMETHING SOLID...AND DRY.



...AIR.



HOWDY.
Uh-hh...HOW YOU
GUYS DOIN'?

I DIDN'T REALLY
EXPECT AN ANSWER--
ESPECIALLY NOT THE
ONE I GOT--

...ACOUSTIC SHOCKWAVES, LIKE TSUNAMIS, BUT WITH NO SEISMOLOGICAL SOURCE. THE WAVES ARE PROPAGATING TOWARD THE SHORELINES OF EVERY CONTINENT--

IT WAS A TELEVISION NEWS BROADCAST. CONSIDERING WHERE I WAS, THAT IN *ITSELF* WAS SURPRISING--BUT NOT HALF AS SURPRISING AS WHAT IT SHOWED.



YOU'RE DOING IT! RIGHT? THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME... YOU CAN CONTROL THE OCEANS ...BUT WHY?

THE HORIZON HAS GONE DARK... THE WAVE... MAYBE A THOUSAND FEET HIGH... GETTING BIGGER... JESUS...



IT WAS OLD NEWSREEL FOOTAGE, BUT THEIR POINT WAS UNMISTAKABLE.

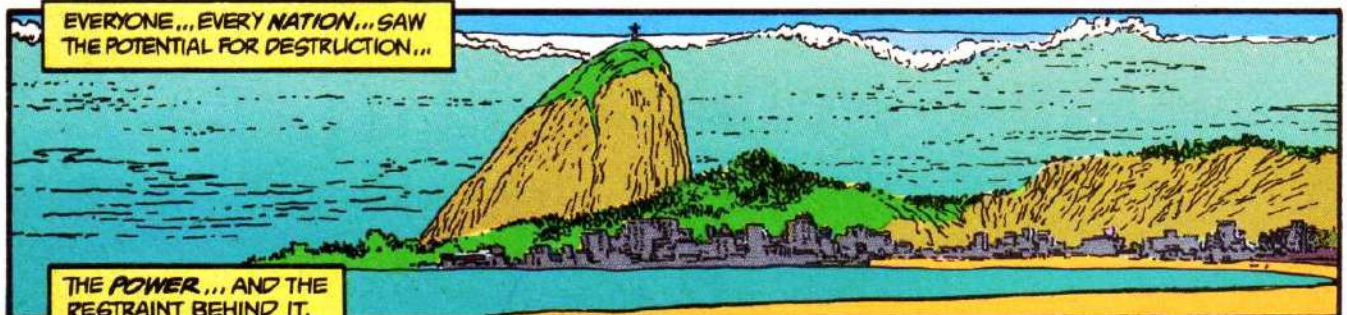
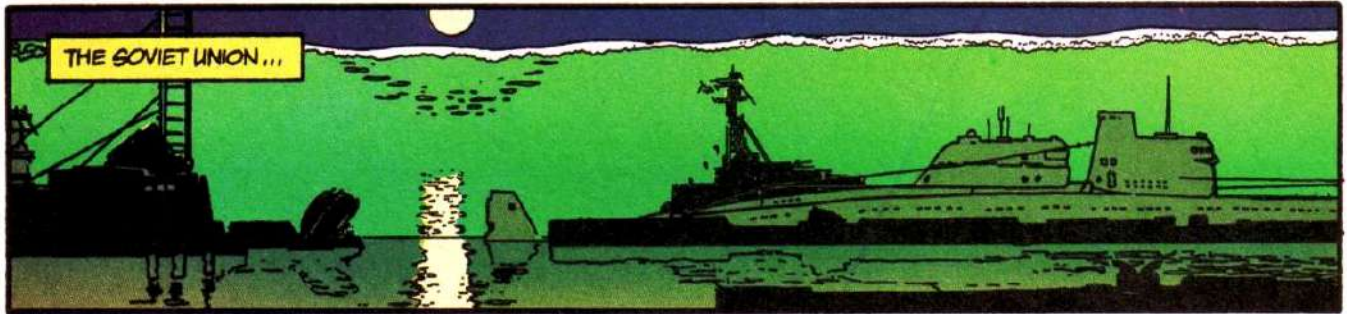
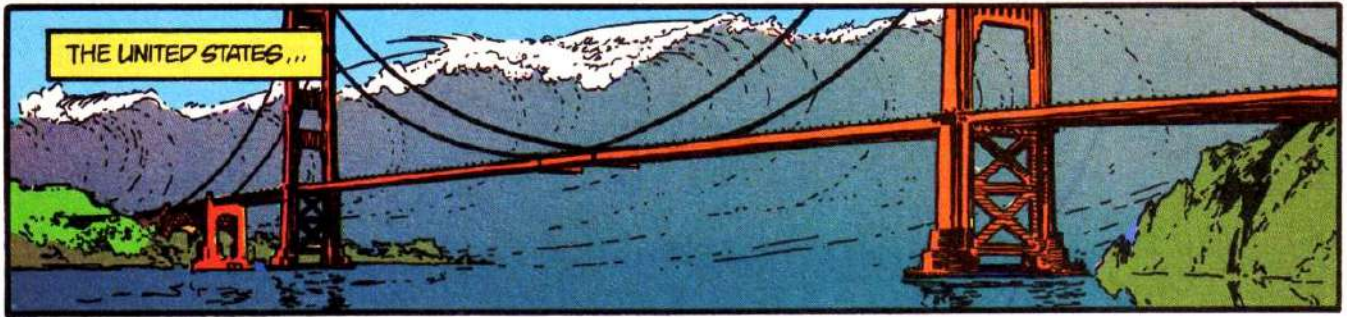


HEY, YOU DON'T KNOW THEY'RE REALLY GONNA DO IT!

WHERE DO YOU GET OFF PASSING JUDGEMENT ON US, WHEN YOU CAN'T BE SURE? HOW DO YOU KNOW?



HOW COULD THEY NOT KNOW?



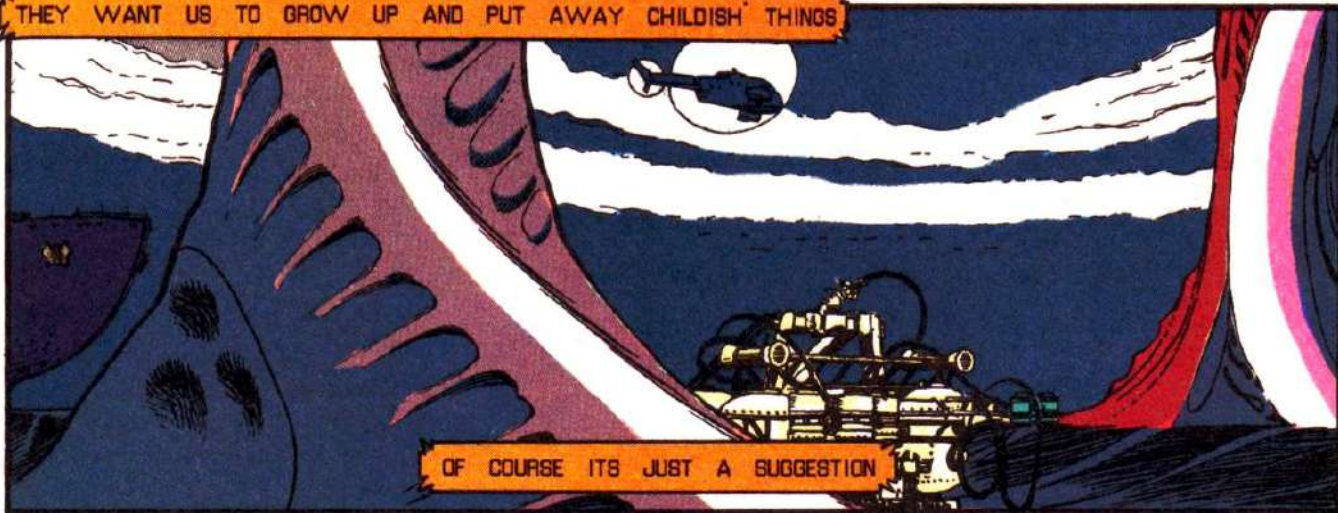


THEY'VE LEFT US ALONE BUT IT BOTHERS THEM TO SEE US HURTING EACH OTHER, GETTING OUT OF HAND LATELY



THEY SENT A MESSAGE, HOPE YOU GOT IT.

THEY WANT US TO GROW UP AND PUT AWAY CHILDISH THINGS

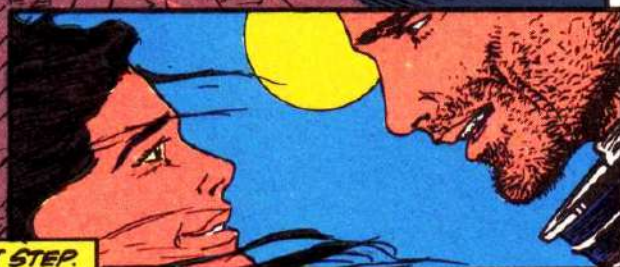


OF COURSE ITS JUST A SUGGESTION

THE ENTIRE WORLD HAD BEEN SENT A MESSAGE THAT NO ONE COULD MISTAKE. WHATEVER HAPPENED NOW WOULD BE OUR DECISION--OUR RESPONSIBILITY.



IT WAS UP TO US TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP.



THE END.